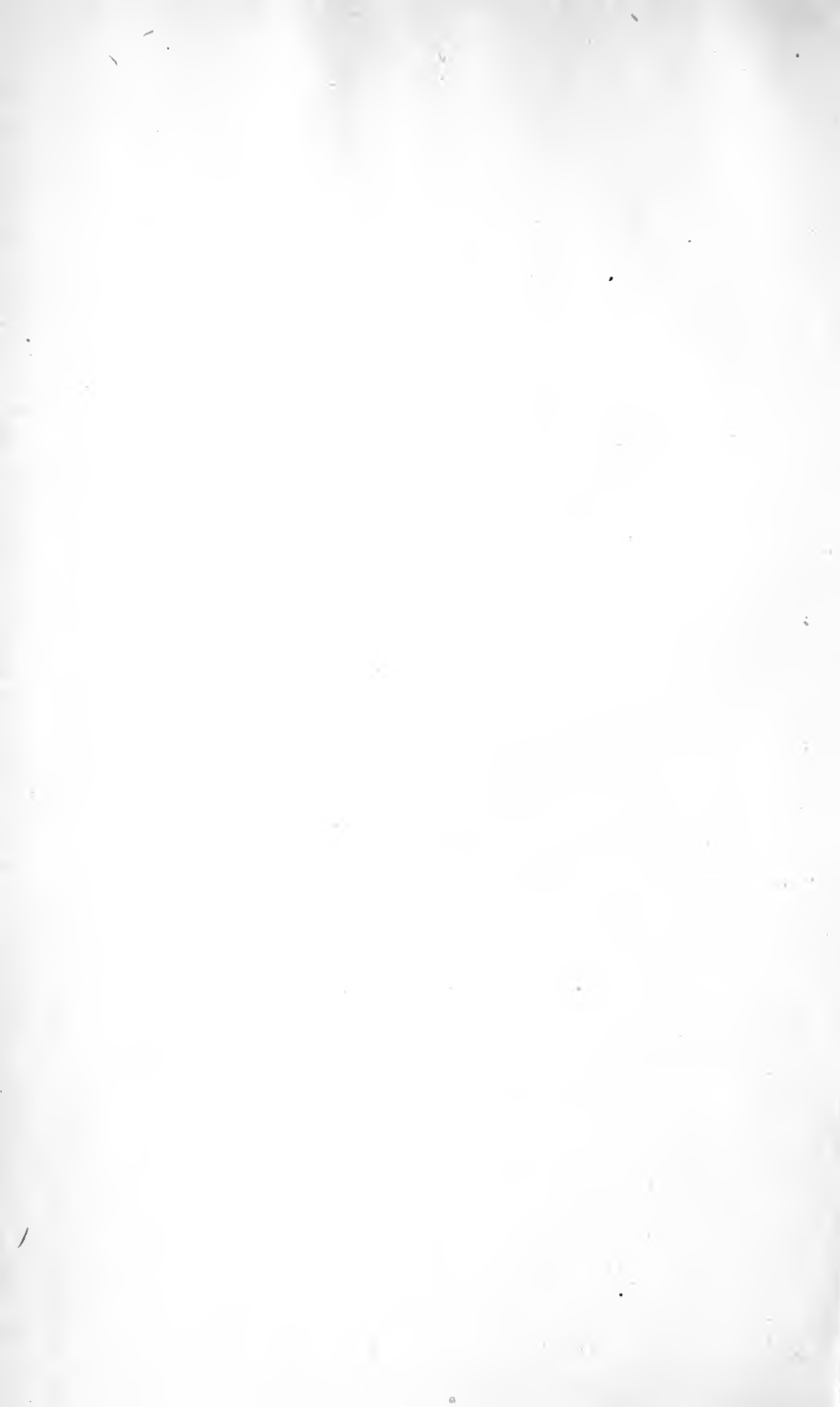


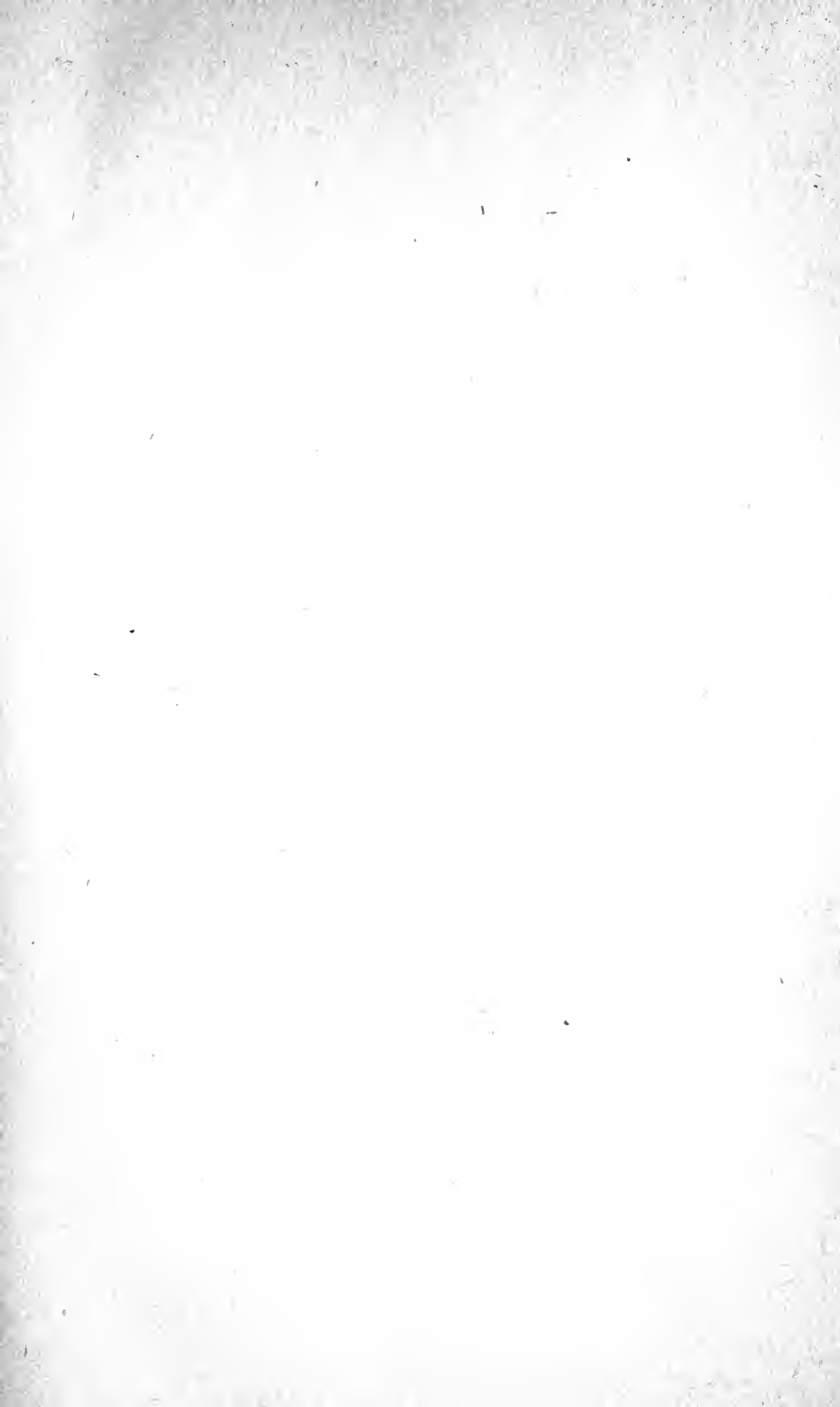


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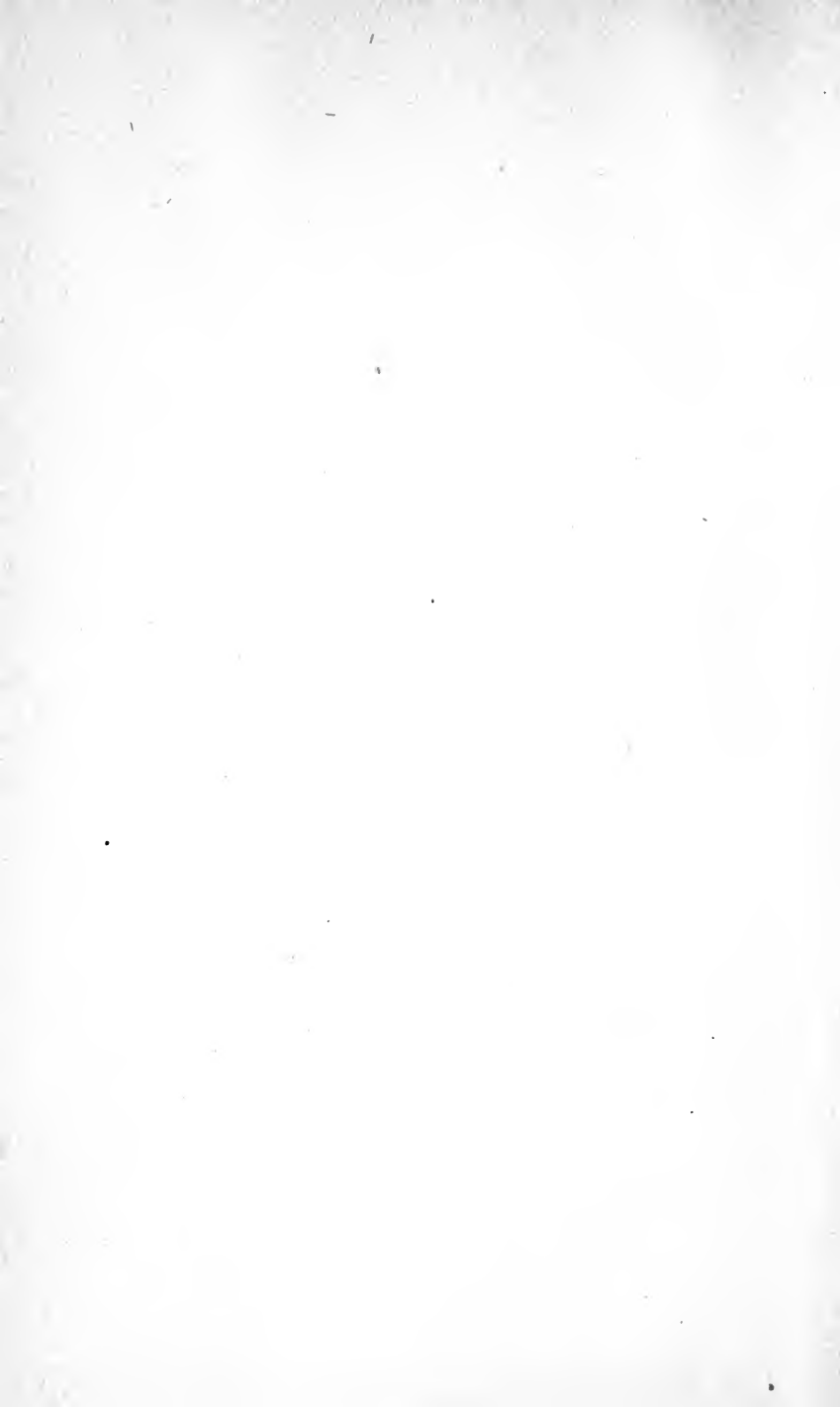


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**THE POEMS OF  
H. C. BUNNER**









W. C. Barnes

# THE POEMS OF H. C. BUNNER

*A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,  
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread, and Thou  
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—  
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!*

—OMAR KHAYYAM

NEW EDITION

THE POEMS OF  
H. C. BUNNER

NEW YORK  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
1917

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TO THE  
LIBRARY OF  
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## INTRODUCTION

H. C. Bunner — for such was the signature Henry Cuyler Bunner chose to employ both in public and in private — was born at Oswego, N. Y., August 3, 1855, and he died at Nutley, N. J., May 11, 1896. His life was spent in the city of New York or in its immediate vicinity. Here he went to school; here he prepared for Columbia College, which he was regretfully unable to enter; here he worked for a while in a mercantile office; and here at last he was able to adopt the profession of letters. Here he wrote plays and stories and verses; and here he was for nearly a score of years the editor of *Puck*, the first comic journal to establish itself in America.

His work as a political journalist was as different as possible from most work done in that thorny field; it was vigorous but never violent. He sought to convince by sheer force of argument, and he tried always to be fair toward his opponents. But interest in the work of the journalist fades in a day or a week, or a month at most; while the story-teller and the poet are more fortunate, and their work may survive for a year or a decade, or a century if a single story, however brief, or a single lyric, however slight, has found a lodging in the hearts of the people. It is perhaps as a poet that the author of "Airs from Arcady" is likely longest to be remembered; and it is as a poet that he

## INTRODUCTION

would have chosen to be cherished in men's memories. And his verse met with the same good fortune that befell his fiction; it pleased both the critical and the uncritical. It has the form, the finish, the flavor of scholarship that the cultivated recognize and relish; and it has also the freshness, the spontaneity, the heartiness, and the human sympathy wanting which no poetry has ever been welcome outside the narrow circle of the dilettanti.

In the present volume are included the contents of the two books of verse he published during his lifetime, "Airs from Arcady" in 1884, and "Rowen" in 1892, and also a selection from the "Ballads of the Town" (which he had been contributing to *Puck* for half-a-dozen years), together with a few of his later lyrics and the virile and resonant lines read before the Army of the Potomac at New London in 1895.

BRANDER MATTHEWS.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

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**AIRS FROM ARCADY  
AND ELSEWHERE**

**[1884]**





## TO BRANDER MATTHEWS:

### BY THE HEARTH

*The night is late; your fire is whitening fast,  
Our speech has silent spaces, and is low;  
Yet there is much to say before I go —  
And much is left unsaid, dear friend, at last.*

*Yet something may be said. This fading fire  
Was never cold for me; and never cold  
Has been the welcoming glance I knew of old —  
Warm with a friendship usage could not tire.*

*The kindly hand has never failed me yet,  
And never yet has failed the cheering word;  
Nor ever went Perplexity unheard,  
But ever was by thoughtful Counsel met.*

*The plans we made, the hopes we nursed, have fed  
These friendly embers with a genial fire.  
Not till my spirit ceases to aspire  
Shall their kind light within my heart be dead.*

*Take these, the gathered songs of striving years,  
And many fledged and warmed beside your hearth;  
Not for whatever they may have of worth —  
A simpler tie, perchance, my work endears.*

*With them this wish: that when your days shall close,  
Life, a well-used and well-contented guest,  
May gently press the hand I oft have pressed,  
And leave you by Love's fire to calm repose.*

[illegible]



**ARCADIA**



## THE WAY TO ARCADY

*Oh, what's the way to Arcady,  
To Arcady, to Arcady;  
Oh, what's the way to Arcady,  
Where all the leaves are merry?*

Oh, what's the way to Arcady?  
The spring is rustling in the tree —  
The tree the wind is blowing through —  
It sets the blossoms flickering white.  
I knew not skies could burn so blue  
Nor any breezes blow so light.  
They blow an old-time way for me,  
Across the world to Arcady.

Oh, what's the way to Arcady?  
Sir Poet, with the rusty coat,  
Quit mocking of the song-bird's note.  
How have you heart for any tune,  
You with the wayworn russet shoon?  
Your scrip, a-swinging by your side,  
Gapes with a gaunt mouth hungry-wide.  
I'll brim it well with pieces red,  
If you will tell the way to tread.

*Oh, I am bound for Arcady,  
And if you but keep pace with me  
You tread the way to Arcady.*

## ARCADIA

And where away lies Arcady,  
And how long yet may the journey be?

*Ah, that (quoth he) I do not know —  
Across the clover and the snow —  
Across the frost, across the flowers —  
Through summer seconds and winter hours.  
I've trod the way my whole life long,  
And know not now where it may be ;  
My guide is but the stir to song,  
That tells me I can not go wrong,  
Or clear or dark the pathway be  
Upon the road to Arcady.*

But how shall I do who can not sing?  
I was wont to sing, once on a time —  
There is never an echo now to ring  
Remembrance back to the trick of rhyme.

*'T is strange you can not sing (quoth he),  
The folk all sing in Arcady.*

But how may he find Arcady  
Who hath nor youth nor melody?

*What, know you not, old man (quoth he) —  
Your hair is white, your face is wise —  
That Love must kiss that Mortal's eyes  
Who hopes to see fair Arcady ?  
No gold can buy you entrance there ;  
But beggared Love may go all bare —  
No wisdom won with weariness ;  
But Love goes in with Folly's dress —*

## ARCADIA

*No game that wit could ever win ;  
But only Love may lead Love in  
To Arcady, to Arcady.*

Ah, woe is me, through all my days  
Wisdom and wealth I both have got,  
And fame and name, and great men's praise,  
But Love, ah, Love! I have it not.

There was a time, when life was new —  
But far away, and half forgot —  
I only know her eyes were blue;  
But Love — I fear I knew it not.  
We did not wed, for lack of gold,  
And she is dead, and I am old.  
All things have come since then to me,  
Save Love, ah, Love! and Arcady.

*Ah, then I fear we part (quoth he),  
My way's for Love and Arcady.*

But you, you fare alone, like me;  
The gray is likewise in your hair.  
What love have you to lead you there,  
To Arcady, to Arcady?

*Ah, no, not lonely do I fare ;  
My true companion's Memory.  
With Love he fills the Spring-time air ;  
With Love he clothes the Winter tree.  
Oh, past this poor horizon's bound  
My song goes straight to one who stands —  
Her face all gladdening at the sound —*

## ARCADIA

*To lead me to the Spring-green lands,  
To wander with enlacing hands.*

*The songs within my breast that stir  
Are all of her, are all of her.  
My maid is dead long years (quoth he),  
She waits for me in Arcady.*

*Oh, yon's the way to Arcady,  
To Arcady, to Arcady;  
Oh, yon's the way to Arcady,  
Where all the leaves are merry.*

## O HONEY OF HYMETTUS HILL

RONDEL

[*Dobson's Variation*]

O HONEY of Hymettus Hill,  
Gold-brown, and cloying sweet to taste,  
Wert here for the soft amorous bill  
Of Aphrodite's courser placed?

Thy musky scent what virginal chaste  
Blossom was ravished to distill,  
O honey of Hymettus Hill,  
Gold-brown, and cloying sweet to taste?

What upturned calyx drank its fill  
When ran the draught divine to waste,  
That her white hands were doomed to spill —  
Sweet Hebe, fallen and disgraced —  
O honey of Hymettus Hill,  
Gold-brown, and cloying sweet to taste?

## DAPHNIS

### I

ERE the spring comes, we will go  
Where belated lines of snow  
Lie in wreathlets chilly bright  
Round the wind-flowers pink and white,  
Trembling even as you, my own,  
In my arms about you thrown;  
Where pale sheets of ice like glass  
Fleck the marshland's greening grass;  
Where beneath the budding trees  
Dead leaves wait for April's breeze —  
Chloë, Chloë, we will wander  
Hither, thither, here and yonder.

Seeing you, the jealous Spring  
Sure will haste a laggard wing,  
Though the upland plains are snowy,  
Though the snow is on the plain —  
*Chloë, Chloë, Chloë, Chloë!*  
But she answers not again.

### II

Chloë, lo! the Spring is here,  
All the wintry walks are clear;  
Prismy purple is the air  
Round the branches brown and bare;  
Purple are the doubtful dyes  
Of the clouds in April's skies —



## ARCADIA

Come, and make last Summer stretch  
Over half a year, and fetch  
Smells of rose and violet  
In the barren ways to set.  
See, the wood remembering misses  
Sweetness of our last year's kisses.  
O'er the place where once we kist  
Falls a veil of rainy mist —

Tangled rain-sheets, wreathed and blowy —  
There is weeping in the rain —

*Chloë, Chloë, Chloë, Chloë!*

Ah! she answers not again!

## THE HOUR OF SHADOWS

UPON that quiet day that lies  
Where forest branches screen the skies,  
The spirit of the eve has laid  
A deeper and a dreamier shade;  
And winds that through the tree-tops blow  
Wake not the silent gloom below.

Only the sound of far-off streams,  
Faint as our dreams of childhood's dreams,  
Wandering in tangled pathways crost,  
Like woodland truants strayed and lost,  
Their faint, complaining echoes roam,  
Threading the forest toward their home.

O brooks, I too have gone astray,  
And left my comrade on the way —  
Guide me through aisles where soft you moan  
To some sad spot you know alone,  
Where only leaves and nestlings stir,  
And I may dream, and dream of Her.

## ROBIN'S SONG

*Warwickshire, 16—*

UP, up, my heart! up, up, my heart,  
This day was made for thee!  
For soon the hawthorn spray shall part,  
And thou a face shalt see  
That comes, O heart, O foolish heart,  
This way to gladden thee.

The grass shows fresher on the way  
That soon her feet shall tread —  
The last year's leaflet curled and gray,  
I could have sworn was dead,  
Looks green, for lying in the way  
I know her feet will tread.

What hand yon blossom curtain stirs,  
More light than errant air?  
I know the touch — 't is hers, 't is hers!  
She parts the thicket there —  
The flowerèd branch her coming stirs  
Hath perfumed all the air.

The Springs of all forgotten years  
Are waked to life anew —  
Up, up, my eyes, nor fill with tears  
As tender as the dew —  
I knew her not in all those years;  
But life begins anew.

## ARCADIA

Up, up, my heart ! up, up, my heart,  
This day was made for thee !  
Come, Wit, take on thy nimblest art,  
And win Love's victory —  
What now? Where art thou, coward heart?  
Thy hour is here — and She !

## A LOST CHILD

Y<sup>E</sup> CRYER

*Here's a reward for who'll find Love!  
Love is a-straying  
Ever since Maying,  
Hither and yon, below, above;  
All are seeking Love!*

Y<sup>E</sup> HAND-BILL

*Gone astray — between the Maying  
And the gathering of the hay,  
Love, an urchin ever playing —  
Folk are warned against his play.*

How may you know him? By the quiver,  
By the bow he's wont to bear.  
First on your left there comes a shiver,  
Then a twinge — the arrow's there.

By his eye of pansy color,  
Deep as wounds he dealeth free;  
If its hue have faded duller,  
'T is not that he weeps for me.

By the smile that curls his mouthlet;  
By the mockery of his sigh;  
By his breath, a spicy South, let  
Slip his lips of roses by.

## ARCADIA

By the devil in his dimple;  
By his lies that sound so true;  
By his shaft-sting, that no simple  
Ever culled will heal for you.

By his beckonings that embolden;  
By his quick withdrawals then;  
By his flying hair, a golden  
Light to lure the feet of men.

By the breast where ne'er a hurt 'll  
Rankle 'neath his kerchief hid —  
*What ? you cry; he wore a kirtle ?*  
Faith ! methinks the rascal did !

*Here's a reward for who'll find Love!*  
*Love is a-straying*  
*Ever since Maying;*  
*Hither and yon, below, above,*  
*I am seeking Love.*

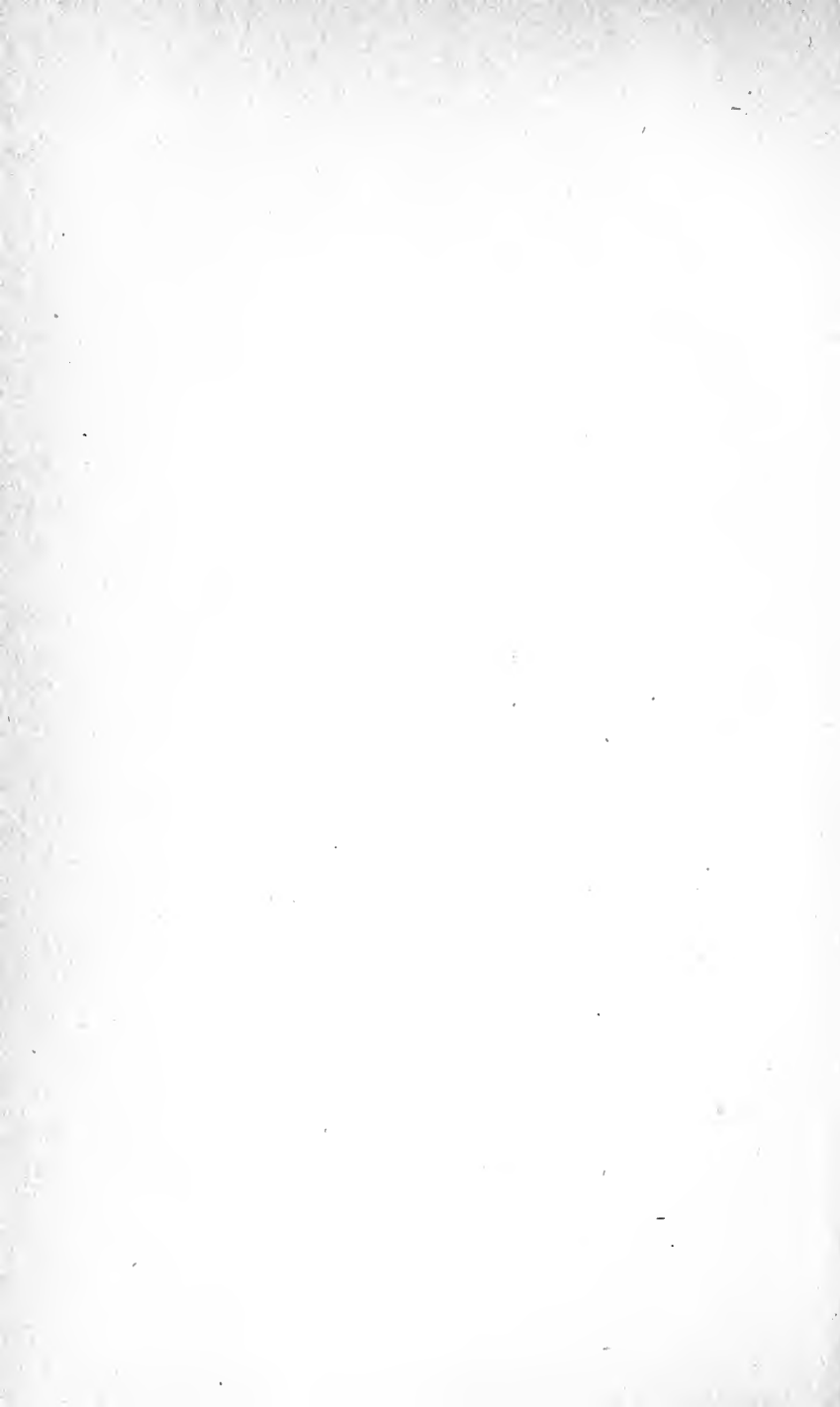
Cryer: H. Bunner:  
Grub Street:  
Cry's Weddings:  
Buryings: Loft  
Child<sup>n</sup>, and right  
cheaplie.  
Ye II<sup>d</sup> Knocker.

y<sup>e</sup> Finder pray'd  
to Bring her to

MASTER CORYDON,

*Petticoat Lane.*

## **PHILISTIA**





## DA CAPO

SHORT and sweet, and we 've come to the end of it —

Our poor little love lying cold.

Shall no sonnet, then, ever be penned of it?

Nor the joys and pains of it told?

How fair was its face in the morning,

How close its caresses at noon,

How its evening grew chill without warning,

Unpleasantly soon!

I can't say just how we began it —

In a blush, or a smile, or a sigh;

Fate took but an instant to plan it;

It needs but a moment to die.

Yet — remember that first conversation,

When the flowers you had dropped at your feet

I restored. The familiar quotation

Was — "Sweets to the sweet."

Oh, their delicate perfume has haunted

My senses a whole season through.

If there *was* one soft charm that you wanted

The violets lent it to you.

I whispered you, life was but lonely:

A cue which you graciously took;

And your eyes learned a look for me only —

A very nice look.

## PHILISTIA

And sometimes your hand would touch *my* hand,  
With a sweetly particular touch;  
You said many things in a sigh, and  
Made a look express wondrously much.  
We smiled for the mere sake of smiling,  
And laughed for no reason but fun;  
Irrational joys; but beguiling —  
And all that is done!

We were idle, and played for a moment  
At a game that now neither will press:  
I cared not to find out what "No" meant;  
Nor your lips to grow yielding with "Yes."  
Love is done with and dead; if there lingers  
A faint and indefinite ghost,  
It is laid with this kiss on your fingers —  
A jest at the most.

'T is a commonplace, stale situation,  
Now the curtain comes down from above  
On the end of our little flirtation —  
A travesty romance; for Love,  
If he climbed in disguise to your lattice,  
Fell dead of the first kisses' pain:  
But one thing is left us now; that is —  
Begin it again.

## GONE

SHE stands upon the steamer's deck;  
The salt wind stings her cheek, goes by,  
Comes back with kiss of foamy fleck,  
And sets her jaunty hat awry.

I sit beside the sea-coal glow,  
That with the night wanes less and less:  
The room is dark — my heart beats slow  
With silence, loss, and loneliness.

## JUST A LOVE-LETTER

“ ‘Miss Blank — at Blank.’   Jemima, let it go !”

—*Austin Dobson*

NEW-YORK, July 20, 1883.

DEAR GIRL:

The town goes on as though  
It thought you still were in it;  
The gilded cage seems scarce to know  
That it has lost its linnet;  
The people come, the people pass;  
The clock keeps on a-ticking:  
And through the basement plots of grass  
Persistent weeds are pricking.

I thought 't would never come — the Spring —  
Since you had left the City:  
But on the snow-drifts lingering  
At last the skies took pity,  
Then Summer's yellow warmed the sun,  
Daily decreased in distance —  
I really don't know how 't was done  
Without your kind assistance.

Aunt Van, of course, still holds the fort:  
I've paid the call of duty;  
She gave me one small glass of port —  
'T was '34 and fruity.

## PHILISTIA

The furniture was draped in gloom  
Of linen brown and wrinkled;  
I smelt in spots about the room  
The pungent camphor sprinkled.

I sat upon the sofa, where  
You sat and dropped your thimble —  
You know — you said you did n't care;  
But I was nobly nimble.  
On hands and knees I dropped, and tried  
To — well, I tried to miss it:  
You slipped your hand down by your side —  
You knew I meant to kiss it!

Aunt Van, I fear we put to shame  
Propriety and precision:  
But, praised be Love, that kiss just came  
Beyond your line of vision.  
Dear maiden aunt! the kiss, more sweet  
Because 't is surreptitious,  
You never stretched a hand to meet,  
So dimpled, dear, delicious.

I sought the Park last Saturday;  
I found the Drive deserted;  
The water-trough beside the way  
Sad and superfluous spurted.  
I stood where Humboldt guards the gate  
Bronze, bumptious, stained and streaky —  
There sat a sparrow on his pate,  
A sparrow chirp and cheeky.

## PHILISTIA

Ten months ago! ten months ago! —  
It seems a happy second,  
Against a life-time lone and slow,  
By Love's wild time-piece reckoned —  
You smiled, by Aunt's protecting side,  
Where thick the drags were massing,  
On one young man who did n't ride,  
But stood and watched you passing.

I haunt Purssell's — to his amaze —  
Not that I care to eat there;  
But for the dear clandestine days  
When we two had to meet there.  
Oh, blessed is that baker's bake,  
Past cavil and past question;  
I ate a bun for your sweet sake,  
And Memory helped Digestion.

The Norths are at their Newport ranch;  
Van Brunt has gone to Venice;  
Loomis invites me to the Branch,  
And lures me with lawn-tennis.  
O bustling barracks by the sea!  
O spiles, canals, and islands!  
Your varied charms are naught to me —  
My heart is in the Highlands!

My paper trembles in the breeze  
That all too faintly flutters  
Among the dusty city trees,  
And through my half-closed shutters:

## PHILISTIA

A northern captive in the town,  
Its native vigor deadened,  
I hope that, as it wandered down,  
Your dear pale cheek it reddened.

I 'll write no more. A *vis-à-vis*  
In halcyon vacation  
Will sure afford a much more free  
Mode of communication;  
I 'm tantalized and cribbed and checked  
In making love by letter:  
I know a style more brief, direct —  
And generally better !

## SHE WAS A BEAUTY

### RONDEL

SHE was a beauty in the days  
When Madison was President:  
And quite coquettish in her ways —  
On conquests of the heart intent.

Grandpapa, on his right knee bent,  
Wooed her in stiff, old-fashioned phrase —  
She was a beauty in the days  
When Madison was President.

And when your roses where hers went  
Shall go, my Rose, who date from Hayes,  
I hope you 'll wear her sweet content  
Of whom tradition lightly says:  
She was a beauty in the days  
When Madison was President.



## CANDOR

OCTOBER — A WOOD

"I KNOW what you 're going to say," she said,  
And she stood up looking uncommonly tall;  
"You are going to speak of the hectic Fall,  
And say you 're sorry the summer's dead.  
And no other summer was like it, you know,  
And can I imagine what made it so?  
Now are n't you, honestly?" "Yes," I said.

"I know what you 're going to say," she said;  
"You are going to ask if I forget  
That day in June when the woods were wet,  
And you carried me" — here she dropped her head —  
"Over the creek; you are going to say,  
Do I remember that horrid day.  
Now are n't you, honestly?" "Yes," I said.

"I know what you 're going to say," she said;  
"You are going to say that since that time  
You have rather tended to run to rhyme,  
And" — her clear glance fell and her cheek grew  
red —

"And have I noticed your tone was queer? —  
Why, everybody has seen it here! —  
Now are n't you, honestly?" "Yes," I said.

## PHILISTIA

"I know what you 're going to say," I said;

"You 're going to say you 've been much annoyed,

And I 'm short of tact — you will say devoid —

And I 'm clumsy and awkward, and call me Ted,

And I bear abuse like a dear old lamb,

And you 'll have me, anyway, just as I am.

Now are n't you, honestly?"

"Ye-es," she said.

## “ACCEPTED”

WE were walking home from meeting, in the calm old  
country street,

Where only a glimmer of moonlight through the  
arch of the elms came down,  
And wakened the twinkling shadows that played with  
her little feet —

Played hide-and-seek with the little feet that peeped  
from beneath her gown.

There are things that a girl should n't think, and cer-  
tainly should n't say —

But when she says them to *you*, the difference it  
makes is queer.

And the touch of her hand on my sleeve seemed to  
ask, in a soft, shy way:

“Can't you put your arm around me, or is n't it  
dark enough here?”

A man does n't let that chance slip by him beyond  
recall;

But I felt that it would n't do, after much con-  
sidering —

Her parents were just ahead, which did n't concern me  
at all —

But her younger brother behind us — ah, that was  
a different thing!

## PHILISTIA

We reached the dear old homestead the moon made  
tenderly white,  
And stood on the broad front porch, and all of them  
lingered to chat  
Of how the soprano had sung and the parson had  
preached that night,  
And how the widow was out in another scandalous  
hat.

A look of appeal from me, and a wonderful glance  
from her,  
And we slipped away from the crowd, unnoticed  
and swift and still —  
I think 't was the flower-beds I crossed; but I did n't  
care if it were —  
And she went back through the house, and we met  
at the window-sill.

At the window around the corner, with never a soul  
to see! —  
And I stood on the grass below, and she bent down  
from above,  
And the honeysuckles were round us as she stretched  
her arms to me,  
And our lips met there in a new, new kiss — our  
betrothal gift from Love.

## **BOHEMIA**



## A PITCHER OF MIGNONETTE

### TRIOLET

A PITCHER of mignonette,  
In a tenement's highest casement:  
Queer sort of flower-pot — yet  
That pitcher of mignonette  
Is a garden in heaven set,  
To the little sick child in the basement —  
The pitcher of mignonette,  
In the tenement's highest casement.

## POETRY AND THE POET

[A SONNET]

*(Found on the Poet's desk)*

WEARY, I open wide the antique pane

I ope to the air

I ope to

I open to the air the antique pane

And gaze { beyond? } the thrift-sown fields of  
across }  
wheat, [commonplace?]

A-shimmering green in breezes born of heat;

And lo!

And high

And my soul's eyes behold { a? }  
the } billowy main

Whose further shore is Greece

strain  
again  
vain

[Arcadia — mythological allusion.— Mem.: Lemprière.]

I see thee, Atalanta, vestal fleet,

And look! with doves low-fluttering round her feet,

Comes Venus through the golden { fields of? }  
bowing } grain

*(Heard by the Poet's neighbor.)*

Venus be bothered — it 's Virginia Dix!

*(Found on the Poet's door.)*

*Out on important business — back at 6.*



## YES?

Is it true, then, my girl, that you mean it —  
The word spoken yesterday night?  
Does that hour seem so sweet now between it  
And this has come day's sober light?  
Have you woke from a moment of rapture  
To remember, regret and repent,  
And to hate, perchance, him who has trapped your  
Unthinking consent?

Who was he, last evening — this fellow  
Whose audacity lent him a charm?  
Have you promised to wed Pulchinello?  
For life taken Figaro's arm?  
Will you have the Court fool of the papers —  
The clown in the journalists' ring,  
Who earns his scant bread by his capers,  
To be your heart's king?

When we met quite by chance at the theater,  
And I saw you home under the moon,  
I 'd no thought, love, that mischief would be at her  
Tricks with my tongue quite so soon;  
That I should forget fate and fortune  
Make a difference 'twixt Sèvres and delf —  
That I 'd have the calm nerve to impòrtune  
You, sweet, for yourself.

## BOHEMIA

It 's appalling, by Jove, the audacious  
Effrontery of that request!  
But you — you grew suddenly gracious,  
And hid your sweet face on my breast.  
Why you did it I cannot conjecture:  
I surprised you, poor child, I dare say,  
Or perhaps — does the moonlight affect your  
Head often that way

\* \* \* \* \*

You 're released! With some wooer replace me  
More worthy to be your life's light;  
From the tablet of memory efface me,  
If you don't mean your Yes of last night.  
But — unless you are anxious to see me a  
Wreck of the pipe and the cup  
In my birthplace and grave-yard, Bohemia —  
Love, don't give me up!

## A POEM IN THE PROGRAMME

A THOUSAND fans are fretting the hot air;  
Soft swells the music of the interlude  
Above the murmurous hum of talk subdued;  
But from the noise withdrawn and from the glare,  
Deep in the shadowy box your coiled hair  
Gleams golden-bright, with diamonds bedewed;  
Your head is bent; I know your dark eyes brood  
On the poor sheet of paper you hold there,  
That quotes my verses — and I see no more  
That bald-head Plutus by your side.

The seas

Sound in my ears; I hear the rustling pines;  
Catch the low lisp of billows on the shore  
Where once I lay in Knickerbockered ease  
And read to you those then unprinted lines.

## BETROTHED

### HE SPEAKS

IF when the wild and wintry weather  
Moans baffled round your warm home nest,  
And swoops to pluck the light foam-feather  
From off the broad bay's heaving breast;  
If then your fancy dim and dreamy  
One careless moment floats to me,  
I hope, my sweet, you may not see me  
As others see.

Amid the crowd that glooms and glances —  
A silk sea, islanded with black,  
And vexed with local storms of dances —  
I, making slow a sinuous track,  
Bow, to the right, to Fan or Florry,  
Nod, to the left, to Nell. And she  
Upon my arm, I should be sorry  
You knew knew me.

The band above rolls rhythmic thunder  
Down on the whirl and glare below;  
The dusty pine-floor pulses under  
The feet that balance to and fro.  
Oh! dream of me that ills afflict me;  
Or dream about me not at all;  
But do not let your dream depict me  
As at the ball.

## BOHEMIA

With eyes that glisten, hands that tremble;  
With breasts that heave and cheeks that burn,  
The gaudy groups disperse, assemble,  
And melt in other groups in turn.  
Through flush of paint and frost of powder,  
I see a face or two I 've known,  
That, rougeless, donned a carmine prouder  
For me alone.

If this were all, or worst, the whirling  
Among the other fools a fool —  
But when I stand my whiskers twirling  
Off by the lobby window cool —  
And watch the dance where death's-heads grin to  
Death's-heads, bemasked, beflowered in vain;  
See all — and then step reckless into  
That dance again!

It were not sin to sin unthinking —  
The drunken sense shall shrive the soul;  
But when, withdrawing from the drinking,  
I stand with cursèd self-control —  
Ah, then, forgive me then, my pure one!  
Poor, pettier deeds themselves defend;  
For time and crime combine to lure one —  
And there 's an end.

But, with hard eyes that plead no error,  
To see my Life, sharp-waked from rest —  
And then to lull the painted terror  
To smirking slumber on my breast:

## BOHEMIA

To see, beneath the rose and lily,  
The black-rimmed eye, the fallow skin,  
As clear as if even now the chilly  
Gray dawn crept in.

Forgive me that! — Who touched my shoulder?  
Oh, it was you, you ivory fan?  
Dark domino, with eyes no bolder  
Than should belong, by rights, to Nan.  
What's that? Aha, you've caught me moping?  
Fine me a bottle for the wrong —  
A quart with silvered shoulders sloping —  
Well, come along!

\* \* \* \* \*

The whirl has changed to scattered revels,  
The glare to single scattered lights;  
A hot and fluctuant draught dishevels  
The hair of Nancy Late-o'-Nights.  
Her eyes are largish for their sockets;  
Champagne spray her satin flecks;  
And I am feeling in my pockets  
For hat-room checks.

But, you, my fair, unconscious sleeping,  
No dream of day disturbs you yet;  
The pale-faced star of love is peeping  
Through morning skies all misty wet.  
I leave my partner, flushed and scornful  
Of etiquette, to seek the floor,  
*I* fly, about that hour most mournful  
Of twenty-four.

## BOHEMIA

When dark has lulled the day benighted  
Till dawn reveals the last caress,  
And half apart they draw, affrighted  
Each at the other's ghastliness.  
When Sleep, with face as blind and ashen  
As Death's, turns restlessly in fear,  
As knowing, in some subtle fashion,  
That morn is near.

With crisping snow the ground is whitened;  
The horses doze; the hackmen yawn,  
Wearily waking; reins are tightened,  
The air is raw with coming dawn.  
From the high porch I raise to Venus  
(Whose pallid radiance still endures)  
My curse. The hall-door swings between us —  
my sleep and yours.

A thousand miles, a thousand ages  
Our dawns are parted, yours and mine.  
For me, by slow and sickly stages,  
The dull light climbs above the line.  
You see, if ever dawn, surprising  
Your slumber, sets your spirit free,  
Across white plains a clear sun rising  
Above the sea.

## DEAD IN BOHEMIA

IRWIN RUSSELL

Died in New Orleans, December, 1879

SMALL was thy share of all this world's delight,  
And scant thy poet's crown of flowers of praise;  
Yet ever catches quaint of quaint old days  
Thou sang'st, and, singing, kept thy spirit bright  
Even as to lips the winds of winter bite  
Some outcast wanderer sets his flute and plays  
Till at his feet blossom the icy ways,  
And from the snow-drift's bitter wasting white  
He hears the uprising carol of the lark,  
Soaring from clover seas with Summer ripe —  
While freeze upon his cheek glad, foolish tears.  
Ah! let us hope that somewhere in thy dark,  
Herrick's full note, and Suckling's pleasant pipe  
Are sounding still their solace in thine ears.



**ELSEWHERE**



## HOLIDAY HOME

WHEN the Autumn winds nip all the hill-grasses brown,  
And sad the last breath of the Summer in town,  
When the waves have a chill, with a spicing of salt,  
That warms the whole blood like no mortal-brewed  
malt —

Then I slip the dull burdens of Duty's employ —  
New London, New London, New London ahoy!

There the latch-string is out, there's a hand at the  
door,

There are kindest faces so kindly before —  
Ah, the song takes a lilt, and the words trip with joy,  
For New London, New London, New London ahoy!

When the Winter lies white on the roofs of the town,  
A sound's in my heart that no storm-wind can drown;  
Through the mist and the rain, and the sleet and the  
snow,

My memory murmurs a melody low,  
Like the swing of a song through the brain of a boy —  
New London, New London, New London ahoy!

## FORFEITS

THEY sent him round the circle fair,  
To bow before the prettiest there.  
I 'm bound to say the choice he made  
A creditable taste displayed;  
Although — I can't say what it meant —  
The little maid looked ill-content.

His task was then anew begun —  
To kneel before the wittiest one.  
Once more that little maid sought he,  
And went him down upon his knee.  
She bent her eyes upon the floor —  
I think she thought the game a bore.

He circled then — his sweet behest  
To kiss the one he loved the best.  
For all she frowned, for all she chid,  
He kissed that little maid, he did.  
And then — though why I can't decide —  
The little maid looked satisfied.

## IN SCHOOL HOURS

### A REAL ROMANCE

You remember the moments that come  
In a school-day afternoon:  
When the illegitimate hum  
Subsides to a drowsy swoon?  
When the smell of ink and slates  
Grows oppressively *warm* and thick;  
Sleep opens her tempting gates;  
And the clock has a drowsy tick?

Forgetful of watch and rule,  
The teacher has time to think  
Of a "recess" in life's long school;  
Of a time to "go out and drink"  
At the spring where the Muse has sipped,  
And laurel and bay-leaf bloom —  
And a contraband note is slipped,  
Meanwhile, across the room.

From a trembling hand it flies  
Like a little white dove of peace;  
And away on its mission it hies  
In an "Atlas of Ancient Greece."  
And the sender hides her face;  
For her eyes have a watery shine,  
And saline deposits trace  
The recent tear-drop's line.

## ELSEWHERE

From the dovecote side it goes  
Across to the ruder half —  
Where a large majority shows  
A suppressed desire to laugh.  
But the boy that they dare not tease  
Receives the crumpled twist —  
And the little hunchback who sees  
Only shakes an impotent fist.

The boy with a fair-curled head  
Smiles with a masculine scorn,  
When the sad small note is read,  
With its straggling script forlorn:  
*“Charley, wy is it you wont  
Forgiv me laughfing at you?  
I wil kill my self if you dont  
Honest I will for true!”*

He responds: He is pleased to find  
She is wiser, at any rate.  
He ’ll be happy to ride behind  
The hearse. May he ask the date?  
She reads — with a glittering eye,  
And the look of an angered queen.  
This were tragic at thirty. Why  
Is it trivial at thirteen?

Trivial! what shall eclipse  
The pain of our childish woes?  
The rose-bud pales its lips  
When a very small zephyr blows.

## ELSEWHERE

You smile, O Dian, bland,  
If Endymion's glance is cold:  
But Despair seems close at hand  
To that hapless thirteen-year-old.

\* \* \* \* \*

To the teacher's ears like a dream  
The school-room noises float —  
Then a sudden bustle — a scream  
From a girl — "She has cut her throat!"  
And the poor little hunchbacked chap  
From his corner leaps like a flash —  
Has her death-like head in his lap —  
And his fingers upon the gash.

'T is not deep. An "eraser" blade  
Was the chosen weapon of death;  
And the face on the boy's knee laid  
Is alive with a fluttering breath.  
But faint from the shock and fright,  
She lies, too weak to be stirred,  
Blood-stained, inky and white,  
Pathetic, small, absurd.

The cruel Adonis stands  
Much scared and woe-begone now;  
Smoothing with nervous hands  
The damp hair off her brow.  
He is penitent, through and through;  
And she — she is satisfied.  
Knowing my sex as I do,  
I wish I could add: She died.

## THE WAIL OF THE "PERSONALLY CONDUCTED"

CHORUS HEARD ON THE DECK OF A SAGUENAY  
STEAM-BOAT

INTEGRAL were we, in our old existence;  
Separate beings, individually:  
Now are our entities blended, fused and foundered —  
We are one person.

We are not mortals, we are not celestials,  
We are not birds, the upper ether cleaving,  
We are a retrogression toward the monad:  
We are Cook's Tourists.

All ways we follow him who holds the guide-book;  
All things we look at, with bedazzled optics;  
Sad are our hearts, because the vulgar rabble  
Call us the Cookies.

Happy the man who, by his cheerful fireside,  
Says to the partner of his joys and sorrows:  
"Anna Maria, let us go to-morrow  
Out for an airing."

Him to Manhattan, or the Beach of Brighton,  
Gaily he hieth, or if, fate-accursèd,  
Lives he in Boston, still he may betake him  
Daown to Nantasket.



## ELSEWHERE

Happy the mortal free and independent,  
Master of the mainspring of his own volition !  
Look on us with the eye of sweet compassion:  
We are Cook's Tourists.

## A CAMPAIGN TORCH

I BLAZED like a meteor through the night  
In the great parade of the great campaign,  
A smoke-tailed comet of yellow light  
I wavered and sputtered through wind and rain.  
High over the surging crowd I tossed,  
A beacon of battle, flickering free;  
And now the contest is gained and lost,  
And victor and victim are one to me.

Ah, never again shall my dinted sides  
Ring responsive when, sharp and clear,  
Comes up from the surging human tides  
The rousing sound of the party cheer.  
Ah, never again shall my oily blaze  
Blow hither and thither, and fail and flare,  
When a thousand masculine marchers raise  
Their "TIGAH!" rending the midnight air.

And never again shall that bright blaze sink,  
When a sudden silence comes over the crowd;  
When procession and people, pausing, think,  
And even a heart-beat seems too loud.  
When amid the revel of fire and noise  
Comes a thought of the days that were dull and  
dread,  
And through these avenues marched the "Boys"  
Who to-day are heroes — or heroes dead.

## ELSEWHERE

When the fingers that hold me grip more slack,  
When the rabble ceases, a space, to rave;  
And men's minds travel a score years back,  
And the faces I light grow suddenly grave;  
When only the sound of the halting feet  
Like a vanishing rain-fall patters past,  
With a muffled fall away down the street,  
And the thundering music stops at last;

When even the buncombe orator, high  
On the flag-draped stand, as he looks around  
Finds his breath come short and his throat grow dry,  
While his saw-edged voice has a husky sound;  
Feeling, for once in his life, afraid;  
Remembering — ay, he remembered then!  
That statecraft is not a tricky trade,  
That he deals with the honor and hopes of men.

No more my spirit of flame shall thrill  
As then: no more shall it leap and play  
When the moment's madness masters the will,  
And the roaring column marches away.

\* \* \* \* \*

No more! By November's night-winds fanned,  
In the gusty lee of a Bowery porch,  
You may see me lighting a pea-nut stand —  
The battered wreck of a Campaign Torch.

*November, 1880.*

## HOME, SWEET HOME, WITH VARIATIONS

BEING SUGGESTIONS OF THE VARIOUS STYLES IN WHICH  
AN OLD THEME MIGHT HAVE BEEN TREATED BY  
CERTAIN METRICAL COMPOSERS

### FANTASIA

#### I

THE ORIGINAL THEME, AS JOHN HOWARD PAYNE  
WROTE IT:

'MID pleasures and palaces though we may roam,  
Be it ever so humble, there 's no place like home!  
A charm from the skies seems to hallow us there,  
Which, seek through the world, is not met with else-  
where.

Home, Home! Sweet, Sweet Home!  
There 's no place like Home!

An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain!  
Oh, give me my lowly thatched cottage again!  
The birds singing gayly that came at my call!  
Give me them! and the peace of mind dearer than all.

Home, Home! Sweet, Sweet Home!  
There 's no place like Home!

## ELSEWHERE

### II

AS ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE MIGHT HAVE  
WRAPPED IT UP IN VARIATIONS:

[*Mid pleasures and palaces —*]

As sea-foam blown of the winds, as blossom of brine  
that is drifted

Hither and yon on the barren breast of the breeze,  
Though we wander on gusts of a god's breath shaken  
and shifted,

The salt of us stings and is sore for the sobbing  
seas.

For home's sake hungry at heart, we sicken in pillared  
porches.

Of bliss made sick for a life that is barren of bliss,  
For the place whereon is a light out of heaven that  
sears not nor scorches,  
Nor elsewhere than this.

[*An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain —*]

For here we know shall no gold thing glisten,  
No bright thing burn, and no sweet thing shine;  
Nor Love lower never an ear to listen

To words that work in the heart like wine.

What time we are set from our land apart,  
For pain of passion and hunger of heart,  
Though we walk with exiles fame faints to christen,  
Or sing at the Cytherean's shrine.

## ELSEWHERE

[VARIATION: *An exile from home* —]

Whether with him whose head  
Of gods is honorèd,  
With song made splendent in the sight of men —  
Whose heart most sweetly stout,  
From ravished France cast out,  
Being firstly hers, was hers most wholly then —  
Or where on shining seas like wine  
The dove's wings draw the drooping Erycine.

[*Give me my lowly thatched cottage* —]

For Joy finds Love grow bitter,  
And spreads his wings to quit her,  
At thought of birds that twitter  
Beneath the roof-tree's straw —

Of birds that come for calling,  
No fear or fright appalling,  
When dews of dusk are falling,  
Or daylight's draperies draw.

[*Give me them, and the peace of mind* —]

Give me these things then back, though the giving  
Be at cost of earth's garner of gold;  
There is no life without these worth living,  
No treasure where these are not told.  
For the heart give the hope that it knows not,  
Give the balm for the burn of the breast —  
For the soul and the mind that repose not,  
O, give us a rest!

## ELSEWHERE

### III

AS MR. FRANCIS BRET HARTE MIGHT HAVE WOVEN  
IT INTO A TOUCHING TALE OF A WESTERN GEN-  
TLEMAN IN A RED SHIRT:

BROWN o' San Juan,  
Stranger, I 'm Brown.  
Come up this mornin' from 'Frisco —  
Be'n a-saltin' my specie-stacks down.

Be'n a-knockin' around,  
Fer a man from San Juan,  
Putty consid'able frequent —  
Jes' catch onter that streak o' the dawn!

Right thar lies my home —  
Right thar in the red —  
I could slop over, stranger, in po'try  
Would spread out old Shakspeke cold dead.

Stranger, you freeze to this: there ain't no kinder gin-  
palace,  
Nor no variety-show lays over a man's own rancho.  
Maybe it hain't no style, but the Queen in the Tower  
o' London  
Ain't got naathin' I 'd swop for that house over thar  
on the hill-side.

Thar is my ole gal, 'n' the kids, 'n' the rest o' my  
live-stock;

## ELSEWHERE

Thar my Remington hangs, and thar there 's a griddle-  
cake br'ilin' —

For the two of us, pard — and thar, I allow, the  
heavens

Smile more friendly-like than on any other locality.

Stranger, nowhere else I don't take no satisfaction.

Gimme my ranch, 'n' them friendly old Shanghai  
chickens —

I brung the original pair f'm the States in eighteen-  
'n'-fifty —

Gimme them and the feelin' of solid domestic comfort.

Yer parding, young man —

But this landscape a kind

Er flickers — I 'low 'twuz the po'try —

I thought thet my eyes hed gone blind.

\* \* \* \* \*

Take that pop from my belt!

Hi, thar! — gimme yer han' —

Or I 'll kill myself — Lizzie! — she 's left me —

*Gone off with a purtier man!*

Thar, I 'll quit — the ole gal

An' the kids — run away!

I be derved! Howsomever, come in, pard —

The griddle-cake's thar, anyway.



## ELSEWHERE

### IV

AS AUSTIN DOBSON MIGHT HAVE TRANSLATED IT  
FROM HORACE, IF IT HAD EVER OCCURRED TO  
HORACE TO WRITE IT:

#### RONDEAU

Palatiis in remotis voluptates  
Si quæris . . .

—FLACCUS, Q. HORATIUS, *Carmina*, Lib. V: 1.

At home alone, O Nomades,  
Although Mæcnas' marble frieze  
Stand not between you and the sky,  
Nor Persian luxury supply  
Its rosy surfeit, find ye ease.

Tempt not the far Ægean breeze;  
With home-made wine and books that please,  
To duns and bores the door deny  
At home, alone.

Strange joys may lure. Your deities  
Smile here alone. Oh, give me these:  
Low eaves, where birds familiar fly,  
And peace of mind, and, fluttering by,  
My Lydia's graceful draperies,  
At home, *alone*.

## ELSEWHERE

### V

AS IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED IN 1744,  
OLIVER GOLDSMITH, AT 19, WRITING THE FIRST  
STANZA, AND ALEXANDER POPE, AT 52, THE  
SECOND:

HOME! at the word, what blissful visions rise;  
Lift us from earth, and draw toward the skies!  
'Mid mirag'd towers, or meretricious joys,  
Although we roam, one thought the mind employs:  
Or lowly hut, good friend, or loftiest dome,  
Earth knows no spot so holy as our Home.  
There, where affection warms the father's breast,  
There is the spot of heav'n most surely blest.  
Howe'er we search, though wandering with the wind  
Through frigid Zembla, or the heats of Ind,  
Not elsewhere may we seek, nor elsewhere know,  
The light of heav'n upon our dark below.

When from our dearest hope and haven reft,  
Delight nor dazzles, nor is luxury left,  
We long, obedient to our nature's law,  
To see again our hovel thatched with straw:  
See birds that know our avenaceous store  
Stoop to our hand, and thence repleted soar:  
But, of all hopes the wanderer's soul that share,  
His pristine peace of mind 's his final prayer.

## ELSEWHERE

### VI

AS WALT WHITMAN MIGHT HAVE WRITTEN ALL  
AROUND IT:

#### I

You over there, young man with the guide-book, red-bound, covered flexibly with red linen,

Come here, I want to talk with you; I, Walt, the Manhattanese, citizen of these States, call you.

Yes, and the courier, too, smirking, smug-mouthed, with oil'd hair; a garlicky look about him generally; him, too, I take in, just as I would a coyote, or a king, or a toad-stool, or a ham-sandwich, or anything or anybody else in the world.

Where are you going?

You want to see Paris, to eat truffles, to have a good time; in Vienna, London, Florence, Monaco, to have a good time; you want to see Venice.

Come with me. I will give you a good time; I will give you all the Venice you want, and most of the Paris.

I, Walt, I call to you. I am all on deck! Come and loafe with me! Let me tote you around by your elbow and show you things.

You listen to my ophicleide!

Home!

Home, I celebrate. I elevate my fog-whistle, inspir'd by the thought of home.

Come in! — take a front seat; the jostle of the crowd not minding: there is room enough for all of you.

## ELSEWHERE

This is my exhibition — it is the greatest show on earth  
— there is no charge for admission.

All you have to pay me is to take in my romanza.

### 2

1. The brown-stone house; the father coming home worried from a bad day's business; the wife meets him in the marble-pav'd vestibule; she throws her arms about him; she presses him close to her; she looks him full in the face with affectionate eyes; the frown from his brow disappearing.

*Darting, she says, Johnny has fallen down and cut his head; the cook is going away, and the boiler leaks.*

2. The mechanic's dark little third-story room, seen in a flash from the Elevated Railway train; the sewing-machine in the corner; the small cook-stove; the whole family eating cabbage around a kerosene lamp; of the clatter and roar and groaning wail of the Elevated train unconscious; of the smell of the cabbage unconscious.

Me, passant, in the train, of the cabbage not quite so unconscious.

3. The French flat; the small rooms, all right-angles, unindividual; the narrow halls; the gaudy cheap decorations everywhere.

The janitor and the cook exchanging compliments up and down the elevator-shaft; the refusal to send up more coal, the solid splash of the water upon his head, the language he sends up the shaft, the triumphant laughter of the cook, to her kitchen retiring.

## ELSEWHERE

4. The widow's small house in the suburbs of the city; the widow's boy coming home from his first day down town; he is flushed with happiness and pride; he is no longer a school-boy, he is earning money; he takes on the airs of a man and talks learnedly of business.
5. The room in the third-class boarding-house; the mean little hard-coal fire, the slovenly Irish servant-girl making it, the ashes on the hearth, the faded furniture, the private provender hid away in the closet, the dreary back-yard out the window; the young girl at the glass, with her mouth full of hair-pins, doing up her hair to go down-stairs and flirt with the young fellows in the parlor.
6. The kitchen of the old farm-house; the young convict just return'd from prison — it was his first offense, and the judges were lenient to him.

He is taking his first meal out of prison; he has been receiv'd back, kiss'd, encourag'd to start again; his lungs, his nostrils expand with the big breaths of free air; with shame, with wonderment, with a trembling joy, his heart too expanding.

The old mother busies herself about the table; she has ready for him the dishes he us'd to like; the father sits with his back to them, reading the newspaper, the newspaper shaking and rustling much; the children hang wondering around the prodigal — they have been caution'd: *Do not ask where our Jim has been; only say you are glad to see him.*

The elder daughter is there, pale-fac'd, quiet; her young man went back on her four years ago; his

## ELSEWHERE

folks would not let him marry a convict's sister. She sits by the window, sewing on the children's clothes, the clothes not only patching up; her hunger for children of her own invisibly patching up. The brother looks up; he catches her eye, he fearful, apologetic; she smiles back at him, not reproachfully smiling, with loving pretense of hope smiling — it is too much for him; he buries his face in the folds of the mother's black gown.

7. The best room of the house, on the Sabbath only open'd; the smell of horse-hair furniture and mahogany varnish; the ornaments on the what-not in the corner; the wax fruit, dusty, sunken, sagged in, consumptive-looking, under a glass globe; the sealing-wax imitation of coral; the cigar boxes with shells plastered over; the perforated card-board motto.

The kitchen; the housewife sprinkling the clothes for the fine ironing to-morrow — it is Third-day night, and the plain things are already iron'd, now in cupboards, in drawers stowed away.

The wife waiting for the husband — he is at the tavern, jovial, carousing; she, alone in the kitchen sprinkling clothes — the little red wood clock with peaked top, with pendulum wagging behind a pane of gayly painted glass, strikes twelve.

The sound of the husband's voice on the still night air — he is singing: *We won't go home till morning!* — the wife arising, toward the wood-shed hastily going, stealthily entering, the voice all the time coming nearer, inebriate, chantant.

## ELSEWHERE

The wood-shed; the club behind the door of the wood-shed; the wife annexing the club; the husband approaching, always inebriate, chantant.

The husband passing the door of the wood-shed; the club over his head, now with his head in contact; the sudden cessation of the song; the temperance pledge signed the next morning; the benediction of peace over the domestic foyer temporarily resting.

### 3

I sing the soothing influences of home.

You, young man, thoughtlessly wandering, with courier, with guide-book wandering,

You hearken to the melody of my steam-calliope.

Yawp!





## ULTIMA THULE



## FORTY

IN the heyday of my years. when I thought the world  
    was young,  
And believed that I was old — at the very gates of  
    Life —  
It seemed in every song the birds of heaven sung  
    That I heard the sweet injunction: “Go get thee a  
    wife!”

And within the breast of youth woke a secret sweet  
    desire;  
For Love spoke in that carol his first mysterious  
    word,  
That to-day through ashen years kindles memory into  
    fire,  
Though the birds are dead that sang it, and the  
    heart is old that heard.

I have watched my youth's blue heavens flush to  
    angry, brooding red,  
And again the crimson palsied in a dull, unpregnant  
    gloom;  
I am older than some sorrows; I have watched by  
    Pleasure dead;  
I have seen Hope grow immortal at the threshold of  
    the tomb.

## ULTIMA THULE

Through the years by turns that gave me now curses,  
now caresses,

I have fought a fight with Fortune wherein Love  
hath had no part;

To-day, when peace hard-conquered ripe years and  
weary blesses,

Will my fortieth summer pardon twenty winters to  
my heart?

When the spring-tide verdure darkens to the sum-  
mer's deeper glories,

And in the thickening foliage doth the year its life  
renew,

Will to me the forests whisper once more their wind-  
learnt stories?

Will the birds their message bring me from out the  
heaven of blue?

Will the wakened world sing for me the old enchanted  
song —

Touch the underflow of love that, through all the  
toil and strife,

Has only grown the stronger as the years passed lone  
and long?

Shall I learn the will of Heaven is to get me a wife?

## ULTIMA THULE

The boy's heart yearns for freedom, he walks hand-in-hand with pleasure;

Made bright with wine and kisses, he sees the face of Life;

He would make the world a pleasure for a love that knows not measure:

But the man seeks Heaven, and finds it in the bosom of his wife.

## STRONG AS DEATH

O DEATH, when thou shalt come to me  
From out thy dark, where she is now,  
Come not with graveyard smell on thee,  
Or withered roses on thy brow.

Come not, O Death, with hollow tone,  
And soundless step, and clammy hand —  
Lo, I am now no less alone  
Than in thy desolate, doubtful land;

But with that sweet and subtle scent  
That ever clung about her (such  
As with all things she brushed was blent);  
And with her quick and tender touch.

With the dim gold that lit her hair,  
Crown thyself, Death; let fall thy tread  
So light that I may dream her there,  
And turn upon my dying bed.

And through my chilling veins shall flame  
My love, as though beneath her breath;  
And in her voice but call my name,  
And I will follow thee, O Death.

## DEAF

As to a bird's song she were listening,  
Her beautiful head is ever sidewise bent;  
Her questioning eyes lift up their depths intent —  
She, who will never hear the wild-birds sing.  
My words within her ears' cold chambers ring  
Faint, with the city's murmurous sub-tones blent;  
Though with such sounds as suppliants may have  
sent  
To high-throned goddesses, my speech takes wing.

Not for the side-poised head's appealing grace  
I gaze, nor hair where fire in shadow lies —  
For her this world's unhallowed noises base  
Melt into silence; not our groans, our cries,  
Our curses, reach that high-removèd place  
Where dwells her spirit, innocently wise.

## LES MORTS VONT VITE

*Les morts vont vite!* Ay, for a little space  
We miss and mourn them, fallen from their place;  
To take our portion in their rest are fain;  
But by-and-by, having wept, press on again,  
Perchance to win their laurels in the race.

What man would find the old in the new love's face?  
Seek on the fresher lips the old kisses' trace?  
For withered roses newer blooms disdain?

*Les morts vont vite!*

But when disease brings thee in piteous case,  
Thou shalt thy dead recall, and thy ill grace  
To them for whom remembrance plead in vain.  
Then, shuddering, think, while thy bed-fellow Pain  
Clasps thee with arms that cling like Death's embrace:

*Les morts vont vite!*



## DISASTER

A ROAR of voices and a tottering town,  
A dusty ruin of high walls crumbling down,

A wild, blind hurrying of men mad with fear,  
Rushing from death to death — above, the clear,

Calm, pitiless, lurid orange of the sky,  
Where one affrighted vulture dares to fly.

On either side an ocean's overflow;  
And fume and thunder of hid fires below.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then, when the next morn breaks, fair, heartless,  
bland,

The young west wind strews a dead world with sand:

Follows the broad and jagged swath where Fate  
Has mown a thousand corpses mutilate.

And on the writhen faces bends to see  
Unspeakable fear, defiance, agony.

Sees life's vain protest turned to impotent stone,  
Dumbly reproachful still, and sees, alone,

Smiling in death, serene, sweet, undistressed,  
One woman with a cancer at her breast.

## SEPTEMBER

### RONDEAU

THE Summer 's gone — how did it go?  
And where has gone the dogwood's snow?  
    The air is sharp upon the hill,  
    And with a tinkle sharp and chill  
The icy little brooklets flow.

What is it in the season, though,  
Brings back the days of old, and so  
    Sets memory recalling still  
    The Summers gone?

Why are my days so dark? for lo!  
The maples with fresh glory glow,  
    Fair shimmering mists the valleys fill,  
    The keen air sets the blood a-thrill —  
Ah! now that *you* are gone, I know  
    The Summer 's gone.

## THEN

WHEN, moved by sudden strange desires,  
And innocent shames and sweet distress,  
Your eyes grow large and moist, your lips  
Pout to a kiss, while virgin fires  
Run flushing to your finger tips —  
Then I will tell you what you guess.

## THE APPEAL TO HAROLD<sup>3</sup>

HARO! Haro!

Judge now betwixt this woman and me,  
Haro!

She leaves me bond, who found me free.  
Of love and hope she hath drained me dry —  
Yea, barren as a drought-struck sky;  
She hath not left me tears for weeping,  
Nor will my eyelids close in sleeping.  
I have gathered all my life's-blood up —  
Haro!

She hath drunk and thrown aside the cup.

Shall she not give me back my days?

Haro!

I made them perfect for her praise.  
There was no flower in all the brake  
I found not fairer for her sake;  
There was no sweet thought I did not fashion  
For aid and servant to my passion.  
Labor and learning worthless were,  
Haro!

Save that I made them gifts for her.

Shall she not give me back my nights?

Haro!

Give me sweet sleep for brief delights?

## ULTIMA THULE

Lo, in the night's wan mid I lie,  
And ghosts of hours that are dead go by:  
Hours of a love that died unshriven;  
Of a love in change for my manhood given:  
She caressed and slew my soul's white truth,

Haro!

Shall she not give me back my youth?

Haro! Haro!

Tell thou me not of a greater judge,

Haro!

It is He who hath my sin in grudge.

Yea, from God I appeal to thee;

God hath not part or place for me.

Thou who hast sinned, judge thou my sinning:

I have staked my life for a woman's winning;

She hath stripped me of all save remembering —

Haro!

Right thou me, right thou me, Harold the King!

## TO A DEAD WOMAN

NOT a kiss in life; but one kiss, at life's end,  
I have set on the face of Death in trust for thee.  
Through long years keep it fresh on thy lips, O friend!  
At the gate of Silence give it back to me.

## THE OLD FLAG

Off with your hat as the flag goes by!  
And let the heart have its say;  
You're man enough for a tear in your eye  
That you will not wipe away.

You're man enough for a thrill that goes  
To your very finger-tips —  
Ay! the lump just then in your throat that rose  
Spoke more than your parted lips.

Lift up the boy on your shoulder, high,  
And show him the faded shred —  
Those stripes would be red as the sunset sky  
If Death could have dyed them red.

The man that bore it with Death has lain  
This twenty years and more; —  
He died that the work should not be vain  
Of the men who bore it before.

The man that bears it is bent and old,  
And ragged his beard and gray, —  
But look at his eye fire young and bold,  
At the tune that he hears them play.

## ULTIMA THULE

The old tune thunders through all the air,  
And strikes right in to the heart; —  
If ever it calls for *you*, boy, be there!  
Be there, and ready to start.

Off with your hat as the flag goes by!  
Uncover the youngster's head!  
Teach him to hold it holy and high,  
For the sake of its sacred dead.

*Evacuation Day, 1883.*



## FROM A COUNTING-HOUSE

THERE is an hour when first the westering sun  
Takes on some forecast faint of future red;  
When from the wings of weariness is shed  
A spell upon us toilers, every one;  
The day's work lags a little, well-nigh done;  
Far dusky lofts through all the close air spread  
A smell of eastern bales; the old clerk's head  
Nods by my side, heavy with dreams begun  
In dear dead days wherein his heart is tombed.  
But I my way to Italy have found;  
Or wander where high stars gleam coldly through  
The Alpine skies; or in some nest perfumed,  
With soft Parisian luxury set round,  
Hold out my arms and cry "At last!" to you.

**TO A HYACINTH PLUCKED FOR  
DECORATION DAY**

O FLOWER, plucked before the dew  
Could wet thy thirsty petals blue —  
Grieve not! a dearer dew for thee  
Shall be the tears of Memory.

## LONGFELLOW

POET whose sunny span of fruitful years  
Outreaches earth, whose voice within our ears  
Grows silent — shall we mourn for thee? Our sigh  
Is April's breath, our grief is April's tears.

If this be dying, fair it is to die.  
Even as a garment weariness lays by,  
Thou layest down life to pass, as Time hath passed,  
From wintry rigors to a Springtime sky.

Are there tears left to give thee at the last,  
Poet of spirits crushed and hearts down-cast,  
Loved of worn women who, when work is done,  
Weep o'er thy page in twilights fading fast?

Oh, tender-toned and tender-hearted one,  
We give thee to the season new begun —  
Lay thy white head within the arms of Spring —  
Thy song had all her shower and her sun.

Nay, let us not such sorrowful tribute bring,  
Now that thy lark-like soul hath taken wing:  
A grateful memory fills and more endears  
The silence when a bird hath ceased to sing.

## FOR THE FIRST PAGE OF THE ALBUM

I OPEN this to write for her  
    Within whose gates is ever Peace;  
Beneath whose roof the wanderer  
    Finds from his wayside cares release.

Her presence is in every room,  
    Her silent love is everywhere,  
As pleasant as a soft perfume,  
    As soothing as a twilight air.

No song shall tell the friendly debt  
    My gratitude were glad to pay;  
But here may other singers set  
    The half of what I fain would say.

More sweetly may their songs be made,  
    Their lines in purer cadence fall,  
Yet none — yet none leaves more unsaid,  
    With truer wish to say it all.

*September 10, 1883.*

## FAREWELL TO SALVINI<sup>4</sup>

April 26th, 1883

ALTHOUGH a curtain of the salt sea-mist  
    May fall between the actor and our eyes —  
    Although he change for dear and softer skies  
These that the sun has yet but coyly kissed —  
Although the voice to which we loved to list  
    Fail ere the thunder of our plaudits dies —  
    Although he parts from us in gracious wise,  
With grateful memory left his eulogist —  
    His best is with us still.

                                    His perfect art  
Has held us 'twixt a heart-throb and a tear —  
    Cheating our souls to passionate belief.  
And in his greatness we have now some part —  
    We have been courtiers of the crownless Lear,  
    And partners in Othello's mighty grief.

## ON READING A POET'S FIRST BOOK

THIS is a breath of summer wind  
That comes — we know not how — that goes  
As softly, — leaving us behind  
Pleased with a smell of vine and rose.

Poet, shall this be all thy word?  
Blow on us with a bolder breeze;  
Until we rise, as having heard  
The sob, the song of far-off seas.

Blow in thy shell until thou draw,  
From inner whorls where still they sleep,  
The notes unguessed of love and awe,  
And all thy song grow full and deep.

Feeble may be the scanty phrase —  
Thy dream a dream tongue never spake —  
Yet shall thy note, through doubtful days,  
Swell stronger for Endeavor's sake.

As Jacob, wrestling through the night,  
Felt all his muscles strengthen fast  
With wakening strength, and met the light  
Blessèd and strong, though overcast.

## FEMININE

SHE might have known it in the earlier Spring,  
That all my heart with vague desire was stirred;  
And, ere the Summer winds had taken wing,  
I told her; but she smiled and said no word.

The Autumn's eager hand his red gold grasped,  
And she was silent; till from skies grown drear  
Fell soft one fine, first snow-flake, and she clasped  
My neck and cried, "Love, we have lost a year!"

## REDEMPTION

As to the drunkard who at morn doth wake  
Are the clear waters of the virgin spring  
Wherewith he bathes his eyes that burn and sting  
And his intolerable thirst doth slake,  
So is the thought of thee to me, who break  
One sober moment, sick and shuddering,  
From all my life's unworthiness, to fling  
Me at thy memory's feet, and for Love's sake  
Pray that thy peace may enter in my soul.  
Love, thou hast heard ! My veins more calmly flow—  
The madness of the night is passed away —  
Fire of false eyes, thirst of the cursèd bowl —  
I drink deep of thy purity, and lo !  
Thou hast given me new heart to meet the day.



## TRIUMPH

THE dawn came in through the bars of the blind, —  
And the winter's dawn is gray, —  
And said — However you cheat your mind,  
The hours are flying away.

A ghost of a dawn, and pale and weak —  
Has the sun a heart, I said,  
To throw a morning flush on the cheek  
Whence a fairer flush has fled?

As a gray rose-leaf that is fading white  
Was the cheek where I set my kiss;  
And on that side of the bed all night  
Death had watched, and I on this.

I kissed her lips, they were half apart,  
Yet they made no answering sign;  
Death's hand was on her failing heart,  
And his eyes said — "She is mine."

I set my lips on the blue-veined lid,  
Half-veiled by her death-damp hair;  
And oh, for the violet depths it hid,  
And the light I longed for there!

## ULTIMA THULE

Faint day and the fainter life awoke,  
And the night was overpast;  
And I said — "Though never in life you spoke,  
Oh, speak with a look at last!"

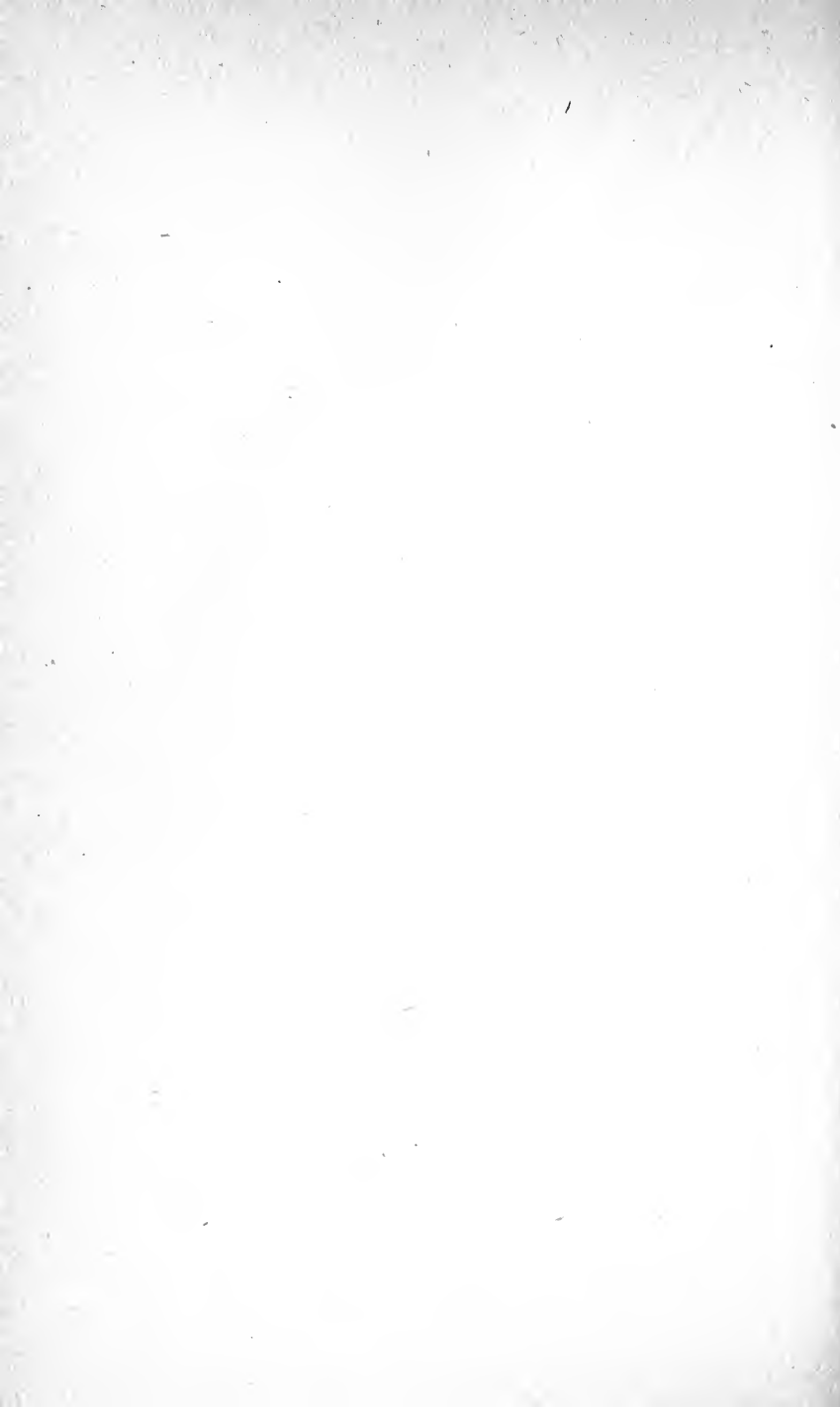
For the space of a heart-beat fluttered her breath,  
As a bird's wing spread to flee;  
She turned her weary arms to Death,  
And the light of her eyes to me.

## TO HER

PERCHANCE the spell that now must part  
Our lives may yet be broken;  
And then your sweet unconscious heart  
May know my love unspoken.  
Perchance the jealous seal of Time  
May break in some far season;  
And you will read this book of rhyme,  
And know the rhyme's dear reason.

How long ago the song began!  
How lonely was the singer,  
Whose mistress never thought to scan  
The lines he dared to bring her!  
Oh, will you ever read it true,  
When all the rhymes are ended —  
How much of Hope, of Love, of You,  
With every verse was blended.

Who knows? But when the bars shall fall  
That set our souls asunder,  
May you, at last, in hearing all,  
Feel Love grow out of Wonder;  
And may the song be glad as when  
The boy's fresh voice commenced it;  
And may my heart be beating then,  
To feel your own against it!



**ROWEN**

**"SECOND CROP" SONGS**

**[1892]**



TO A. L. B.

*I put your rose within our baby's hand,  
To bear back with him into Baby-land;  
Your rose, you grew it — O my ever dear,  
What roses you have grown me, year by year!  
Your lover finds no path too hard to go  
While your love's roses round about him blow.*

October, 1892.





*Why do I love New York, my dear?  
I know not. Were my father here —  
And his —— and HIS —— the three and I  
Might, perhaps, make you some reply.*



## AT THE CENTENNIAL BALL — 1889

### AN OLD MAN'S OLD FANCIES

THERE 's the music — go, my sweet,  
I will sit and watch you here;  
There 's a tingling in my feet  
I 've not felt this many a year.  
But my music 's done, my dear —  
'T is enough this heart can beat  
Time to strains that stir your heart;  
'T is enough these eyes can see  
Fresh young fires of pleasure start  
In the eyes you turn to me.  
Loving, yet, my dear,  
Loath to linger here —  
Music-maddened, all impatient to be free.  
Go, the music swells and rises — go!  
Younger faces wait you where  
All a-tremble is the air,  
And a rhythmic murmur low  
Wavers to and fro —  
Life and dance and clasp of lover's hands await  
you there.  
Go, my child, with cheeks that burn,  
Eyes that shine, and fluttering breast,  
Go, and leave me — not alone!  
In the dance you shall be prest

## ROWEN

Close, and all your soul shall turn  
Tender at the music's tone;  
But more close, more tenderly  
Shall the exultant harmony  
Speak to this old, awakened heart, that hears  
The voices of dead years.

*She goes — and from below, up-springing,  
The stress and swell of lilting sound  
Set one vast field of color swinging  
In sinuous measure round and round.  
The fiddle-bows go up in the air,  
And the fiddle-bows go down;  
And the girl of mine with the yellow hair  
Is dancing to an old-time air  
With the maids of New York town.*

My eyes grow dim to see;  
But the music sends a song to me,  
And here 's the song that comes from below —  
From the dancing tip of the fiddle-bow:

### THE BALL — 1789

THE Town is at the Ball to-night,  
The Town is at the Ball;  
From the Battery to Hickory Lane  
The Beaux come one and all.  
The French folk up along the Sound  
Took carriage for the city,  
And Madge the Belle, from New Rochelle,  
Will stop with Lady Kitty.

## ROWEN

And if the Beaux could have their way  
Their choice would be, in Brief,  
That Madge the Belle should lead the ball  
And open with THE CHIEF.  
Though Lady Kitty's high estate  
May give his choice some reason,  
By Right Divine Madge holds her place —  
The Toast of all the Season.

Behold her as she trips the floor  
By Lady Kitty's side —  
How low bows Merit at her glance,  
And Valor, true and tried!  
Each hand that late the sword-hilt grasped  
Would fain her hand be pressing —  
But, ah! fair Madge, who 'll wear your badge  
Is past all wooer's guessing.

The Colonel bows his powdered head  
Well nigh unto her feet;  
Fame's Trump rings dull unto his ears,  
That wait her Accents sweet.  
The young Lieutenant, Trig and Trim,  
Who lately won his spurs,  
Casts love-sick glances in her way,  
And wins no glance of hers.

Before her bows the Admiral,  
Whose head was never bowed  
Before the foamy-crested wave  
That wet the straining shroud.

## ROWEN

And all his pretty midshipmen,  
They stand there in a line,  
Saluting this Fair Craft that sails  
With no surrendering sign.

And so she trips across the floor  
On Lady Kitty's arm,  
And grizzled pates and frizzled pates  
All bow before her charm.  
And she will dance the minuet,  
A-facing Lady Kitty,  
Nor miss THE CHIEF — she hath, in brief,  
Her choice of all the city.

\* \* \* \* \*

But in the minuet a hand  
Shall touch her finger-tips,  
And almost to a Kiss shall turn  
The Smile upon her lips;  
And he is but a midship boy,  
And she is Madge the Belle;  
But never to Chief nor to Admiral  
Such a tale her lips shall tell.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Town is at the Ball to-night,  
The Town is at the Ball,  
And the Town shall talk as never before  
Ere another night shall fall;  
And men shall rave in Rector street,  
And men shall swear in Pine,

## ROWEN

And hearts shall break for Madge's sake  
From Bay to City Line.

And Lady Kit shall wring her hands,  
And write the tale to tell  
(To that much dreaded Maiden Aunt  
Who lives at New Rochelle)  
All of a gallant Midshipman  
Who wooed in April weather  
The Fairest of All at the Chieftain's Ball —  
And they ran away together!

---

*And from below the music flowing  
Has taken a measured, mocking fall,  
And forward, backward, coming, going,  
They dance the Minuet of the Ball.  
And even as once her grandmama  
Went flitting to and fro  
In a dance she danced with grandpapa  
One hundred years ago —  
So, while the fiddle-bows go up,  
And the fiddle-bows go down,  
A daughter of mine with yellow hair  
Is dancing to an old-time air  
With the maids of New York town.*

And now again, in cadence changing,  
The music takes a waltzing swing,  
And sets an old man's fancies ranging  
Among the tunes his memories sing: —  
I hear a sound of strings long slackened,

## ROWEN

The hum of many a stringless bow  
On fiddles broken, warped and blackened  
With dust of years of long ago;  
And hear the waltz that thrilled and quivered  
Along the yearning pulse of youth,  
And unto two dumb hearts delivered  
The message of Love's hidden truth.

### THE BALL — 1861

To the front at morn!  
To the front at the break of day!  
And the transport ship lies tossing on the waves of the  
lower bay.

Her sails are white  
In the silver stream of the moon;  
The moon will soon be red as blood, her sails will be  
reddened soon.

To us who go  
Is given a dance to-night —  
We may clasp our arms around women and gather the  
strength to fight.

Clasp Heaven so close!  
Look in Love's eyes and part!  
Will the bullet that kills the body make an end of the  
hunger of heart?



## ROWEN

To our breasts they strain,  
Beautiful, warm with life —  
Make men of us who would make us heroes for mortal  
strife.

Can I hold you thus,  
And release you, all unsaid?  
Know I shall want you, dead or living, and dream you  
may want me, dead?

The last, last dance —  
For the gray of the morn is near —  
Cling to me once, till I learn the tune that shall out-  
sing Death at my ear!

Cling to me once, but once —  
This is my whole life's round!  
Give me to face Death's silence this moment of motion  
and sound.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then, as the word unsaid  
Found voice in the music's tone,  
She looked in my face, and I knew that my soul should  
not go alone.

And the gray dawn came,  
But to us had come a light  
To make the face of Life and the face of Death shine  
bright.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ROWEN

To the front at morn !  
To the front at the break of day !  
Farewell, I said, my Love, and love went with me upon  
my way.

---

So, through the weary years  
Of prayers and tears  
She waited for me, till I came at last;  
Came when the soldier's work was done,  
And the one holy end of war was won,  
And parting-time was past.

And once again the old tune, winging  
Its way to hearts that still were young,  
Set brain and pulse and spirit swinging,  
And once again to me she clung.  
And then — but, ah ! my music's done —  
For this short way I have to go  
An old tune in my mind may run  
That she and I once used to know,  
And make an old man's memories stir —  
But all earth's music died with her.  
But for you below, my sweet —  
You she left me — still for you  
Bowstrings quiver, batons beat,  
And the fiddles thrill you through.  
Yours it is to dance, and still,  
Dancing, you may look in eyes  
Quick to love you, if you will —  
Quick to turn to high emprise

## ROWEN

When the land that gave them birth  
Makes the test of manhood's worth.

But, for me, my music's done, —  
I can only sit and hear  
Through your whirl of tunes the one  
That Love holds dear.

*While the fiddle-bows go up in the air,  
And the fiddle-bows go down,  
And the girl of mine with the yellow hair  
Is dancing to an old-time air  
With the maids of New York town.*



*There 's but one thing to sing about,  
And poor 's the song that does without;  
And many a song would not live long  
Were it not for the theme that is never worked out.*



## THE LAST OF THE NEW YEAR'S CALLERS

THE STORY OF AN OLD MAN, AN OLD MAN'S FRIEND-  
SHIP, AND A NEW CARD-BASKET

THE door is shut — I think the fine old face  
Trembles a little, round the under lip;  
His look is wistful — can it be the place  
Where, at his knock, the bolt was quick to slip  
(It had a knocker then), when, bravely decked,  
He took, of New Year's, with his lowest bow,  
His glass of egg-nog, white and nutmeg-flecked,  
From her who is — where is the young bride now?

O Greenwood, answer! Through your ample gate  
There went a hearse, these many years ago;  
And often by a grave — more oft of late —  
Stands an old gentleman, with hair like snow.  
Two graves he stands by, truly; for the friend  
Who won her, long has lain beside his wife;  
And their old comrade, waiting for the end,  
Remembers what they were to him in life.

And now he stands before the old-time door,  
A little gladdened in his lonely heart  
To give of love for those that are no more  
To those that live to-day a generous part.  
Ay, *She* has gone, sweet, loyal, brave and gay —

## ROWEN

But then, her daughter's grown and wed the while;  
And the old custom lingers: New Year's Day,  
Will not she greet him with her mother's smile?

But things are changed, ah, changed, you see;  
We keep no New Year's, now, not we —  
    It's an old-time day,  
    And an old-time way,  
And an old-time fashion we've chosen to cut —  
    And the dear old man  
    May wait as he can  
In front of the old-time door that's *shut*.



## MAY-BLOOM

Oh, for you that I never knew! —  
Now that the Spring is swelling,  
And over the way is a whitening may,  
In the yard of my neighbor's dwelling.

O may, oho! Do your sisters blow  
Out there in the country grasses,  
A-mocking the white of the cloudlet light  
That up in the blue sky passes?

Here in town the grass it is brown  
Right under your beautiful clusters;  
But your sisters thrive where the sward's alive  
With emerald lights and lusters.

Dream of my dreams! vision that seems  
Ever to scorn my praying,  
Love that I wait, face of my fate,  
Come with me now a-maying.

Soul of my soul! all my life long,  
Looking for you I wander;  
Long have I sought — shall I find naught  
Under the may-bushes yonder?

Oh, for you that I never knew,  
Only in dreams that bind you! —  
By Spring's own grace I shall know your face  
When under the may I find you !

## THE LINNET

ALL day he sat in silence,  
    In his shining cage sat he,  
And the day grew dim, but never from him  
    Came a note of melody.

But late at night in silence  
    Heart to heart came He and She  
To the darkened room; and out of the gloom  
    Came the linnet's melody.

## HEAVE HO!

HEAVE ho! the anchor over the bow,  
And off to sea go I;  
The wild wind blows, and nobody knows  
That I have you always nigh.  
Right close in my heart I can keep you here  
In memory fond and true,  
For there 'll never be one like you, my dear —  
There 'll never be one like you.

Oho! the billows of Biscay Bay,  
And the stars of the southern sea!  
But the dark-haired girls may shake their curls,  
With never a look from me;  
For the thought of my love shall be ever near,  
Though wide is the ocean blue,  
And there 'll never be one like you, my dear —  
There 'll never be one like you.

The end of the world is a weary way,  
And I know not where it lies,  
And maidens fair may smile on me there,  
And girls with laughing eyes;  
But in all the days of all the year,  
Though I wander the whole world through,  
There 'll never be one like you, my dear —  
There 'll never be one like you.

## AN OLD-FASHIONED LOVE-SONG

TELL me what within her eyes  
Makes the forgotten Spring arise,  
And all the day, if kind she looks,  
Flow to a tune like tinkling brooks;  
Tell me why, if but her voice  
Falls on men's ears, their souls rejoice;  
Tell me why, if only she  
Doth come into the companie,  
All spirits straight enkindled are,  
As if a moon lit up a star.

*Tell me this that's writ above,  
And I will tell you why I love.*

Tell me why the foolish wind  
Is to her tresses ever kind,  
And only blows them in such wise  
As lends her beauty some surprise;  
Tell me why no changing year  
Can change from Spring, if she appear;  
Tell me why to see her face  
Begets in all folk else a grace  
That makes them fair, as love of her  
Did to a gentler nature stir.

Tell me why, if she but go  
Alone across the fields of snow,

## ROWEN

All fancies of the Springs of old  
Within a lover's breast grow bold;  
Tell me why, when her he sees,  
Within him stirs an April breeze;  
And all that in his secret heart  
Most sacredly was set apart,  
And most was hidden, then awakes,  
At the sweet joy her coming makes.

*Tell me what is writ above,  
And I will tell you why I love.*

## A LOOK BACK

A CASTLE-YARD—1585

*(Enter SIR BEVYS, mounted. There comes to meet him, bearing a cup of wine, MAID MARGERY)*

WHAT, Madge — nay, Madge! why, sweetheart, is it thou?

Faith, but I knew thee not — nor know thee yet!

Madge — Margery — child — coz, thou 'st grown apace.

Why, what a merry coming home is this!

To have my cousin meet me in the court,

My half-grown cousin, grown an angel half,

Lifting a cup to make the wanderer welcome,

With such an arm — why, Margery, 't was a reed,

A meagre, sun-specked reed, when last I saw it,

Three years ago — coz, these were busy years

That dealt so kindly with thee. I set forth

Three years ago last Michaelmas, and thou —

Why, thou and Rupert were an elfish pair

Of freckled striplings — yea, thy elbows, Madge,

My cousin Margery, were as rasping sharp

As old Dame Ursula her tongue — ay, cousin,

I 'll drink once more, so thou wilt lift the cup

And show that snowy round again. And Rupert,

My brother Rupert, how fares he? Nay, nay!

First in the tourney? Sturdiest Knight of all?

## ROWEN

Gad's grace, the world has wagged while I have wandered.

I'll tell thee this, thou Hebe hazel-eyed,  
Had I seen further I had wandered less.  
But who 'd have thought the slender girl I left,  
The straggling weed — thy present grace may pardon  
My memory rude — had grown to this fair flower —  
To this bright comeliness, this young perfection,  
This — this —

*Maid Margery let her lashes down,  
And bent her head — perhaps the sunset fell  
A trifle 'thwart her face — perhaps she blushed,  
As, looking down into the empty cup,  
She answered very softly:*

“Rupert did.”

## PRUDENCE, SPINNING

### A STUDIO STUDY

#### I

PRUDENCE, sitting by the fire,  
Lift your head a little higher —  
How the firelight ripples in  
And out the dimple of your chin —  
How your sidewise-tilted head  
Snares the flickering gleams of red;  
Snares them in a golden net  
Than your distaff fleecier yet!  
O my Prudence, turn — but no —  
Shall a century backward flow?  
Prudence — ah, awelladay!  
You 're a hundred years away.

#### II

He who looks upon you hears  
Through a hundred bygone years  
Whir of wheel and foot's light tap  
On the treadle, and the snap  
Of the rose-red hickory logs,  
Sputtering, sinking on the dogs;  
And your breath he almost feels  
In a gentle sigh that steals  
From your lips, while hand in head  
Weave a dream and spin a thread —



## ROWEN

Prudence — who 'd believe it, pray?  
You 're a hundred years away.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

Silent was the studio,  
Duller grew the hickory's glow,  
And the skylight, cold and faint,  
Seemed to frown — “ 'T is late to paint !”  
Prudence drooped a weary head,  
Hearing not the painter's tread,  
As he crossed the room and bent  
Just where blush and firelight blent.  
O my Prudence, model fair !  
Where 's your prim provincial air ?  
Prudence — ah, awelladay !  
How a century slips away !

## THE LIGHT

THERE is no shadow where my love is laid;  
For (ever thus I fancy in my dream,  
That wakes with me and wakes my sleep) some gleam  
Of sunlight, thrusting through the poplar shade,  
Falls there; and even when the wind has played  
His requiem for the Day, one stray sunbeam,  
Pale as the palest moonlight glimmers seem,  
Keeps sentinel for Her till starlights fade.

And I, remaining here and waiting long,  
And all enfolded in my sorrow's night,  
Who not on earth again her face may see,—  
For even memory does her likeness wrong,—  
Am blind and hopeless, only for this light —  
This light, this light, through all the years to be.

*Which was the harder to lay down,  
Art and ambition, or a crown?  
The sceptre or the fiddle-bow?  
I know not. All were loath to go.  
Yet who would call, did Fate permit,  
One of these back to what he quit?*



## GRANT

SMILE on, thou new-come Spring — if on thy breeze  
The breath of a great man go wavering up  
And out of this world's knowledge, it is well.

Kindle with thy green flame the stricken trees,  
And fire the rose's many-petaled cup,  
Let bough and branch with quickening life-blood swell—  
But Death shall touch his spirit with a life  
That knows not years or seasons. Oh, how small  
Thy little hour of bloom! Thy leaves shall fall,  
And be the sport of winter winds at strife;  
But he has taken on eternity.  
Yea, of how much this Death doth set him free! —  
Now are we one to love him, once again.  
The tie that bound him to our bitterest pain  
Draws him more close to Love and Memory.

O Spring, with all thy sweetheart frolics, say,  
Hast thou remembrance of those earlier springs  
When we wept answer to the laughing day,  
And turned aside from green and gracious things?  
There was a sound of weeping over all —  
Mothers uncomforted, for their sons were not;  
And there was crueller silence: tears grew hot  
In the true eyes that would not let them fall.

## ROWEN

Up from the South came a great wave of sorrow  
That drowned our hearthstones, splashed with blood  
our sills;  
To-day, that spared, made terrible To-morrow  
With thick presentiment of coming ills.  
Only we knew the Right — but oh, how strong,  
How pitiless, how insatiable the Wrong!

And then the quivering sword-hilt found a hand  
That knew not how to falter or grow weak;  
And we looked on, from end to end the land,  
And felt the heart spring up, and rise afresh  
The blood of courage to the whitened cheek,  
And fire of battle thrill the numbing flesh.  
Ay, there was death, and pain, and dear ones missed,  
And lips forever to grow pale unkissed;  
But lo, the man was here, and this was he;  
And at his hands Faith gave us victory.

Spring, thy poor life, that mocks his body's death,  
Is but a candle's flame, a flower's breath.  
He lives in days that suffering made dear  
Beyond all garnered beauty of the year.  
He lives in all of us that shall outlive  
The sensuous things that paltry time can give.  
This Spring the spirit of his broken age  
Across the threshold of its anguish stole —  
All of him that was noble, fearless, sage,  
Lives in his lovèd nation's strengthened soul.

## “LET US HAVE PEACE”

U. S. GRANT — JULY 23, 1885

His name was as a sword and shield,  
His words were armèd men,  
He mowed his foemen as a field  
Of wheat is mowed — and then  
Set his strong hand to make the shorn earth smile  
again.

Not in the whirlwind of his fight,  
The unbroken line of war,  
Did he best battle for the right —  
His victory was more:  
Peace was his triumph, greater far than all before.

Who in the spirit and love of peace  
Takes sadly up the blade,  
Makes war on war, that wars may cease —  
He striveth undismayed,  
And in the eternal strength his mortal strength is  
stayed.

Peace, that he conquered for our sake —  
This is his honor, dead.  
We saw the clouds of battle break  
To glory o'er his head —  
But brighter shone the light about his dying bed.

## ROWEN

Dead is thy warrior, King of Life,  
Take thou his spirit flown;  
The prayer of them that knew his strife  
Goes upward to thy throne —  
Peace be to him who fought — and fought for Peace  
alone.



## THE BATTLE OF APIA BAY

MARCH 15, 1889

THE portholes black look over the bay  
To the ports on the other side;  
And the gun in each grim square porthole dim  
Is guarding a nation's pride.

Two fleets are they in an alien sea,  
And whether as friends or foes,  
Till the diplomats' prattle decides their battle,  
Nor sailor nor captain knows.

But strange to each is the sun that starts  
The pitch in the white deck's seams,  
While the watch, half dozing with eyes half closing,  
Go home in their waking dreams.

And strange is the land that lies about,  
And the folk with faces brown,  
To the Pommerland boy with the yellow beard,  
And the boy from Portland town.

And each looks over the bay to each —  
Is the end of it peace or war?  
And the wish that 's best in each brave young breast  
Is the wish for a run ashore.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ROWEN

Death came out of the sea last night —

Death is aboard this morn —

The water is over the war-ship's prow,

And her snow-white sails are torn.

And the bright blue waves that leap to catch

The glint of the tropic sun

Roll overhead, and beneath are the dead,

For the battle is fought and won.

There 's the Pommerland boy with his yellow beard,

And the Maine boy bearded brown;

And there 's weeping sore on the Pommerland shore;

There are tears in Portland town.

O ships that guard two nations' pride,

Death had no need for ye!

They went to their fate through no man's hate —

Death's servant was the Sea.

## WILHELM I., EMPEROR OF GERMANY

MARCH 22, 1797 — JANUARY 2, 1861 — JANUARY 18,  
1871 — MARCH 9, 1888

WHEN the gray Emperor at the Gates of Death  
Stood silent, up from Earth there came the sound  
Of mourning and dismay; man's futile breath  
Vexed the still air around.

But silent stood the Emperor and alone  
Before the ever silent gates of stone  
That open and close at either end of life;  
As who, having fought his fight,  
Stands, overtaken of night,  
And hears afar the receding sound of strife.

Wide open swing the gates:

*Hail, Hohenzollern, hail to thee !  
If thou be he  
For whom each hero waits,  
Hail, hail to thee !*

So rings  
The chorus of the Kings.  
This is the House of Death, the Hall of Fame,  
Lit, its vast length, by torches' flickering flame;  
And, with their faces by the torch-fires lit,  
Around the board the expectant monarchs sit.

## ROWEN

Filled are their drink-horns with the immortals' wine —  
They wait for him, the latest of their line.

Under the flags they sit, beneath  
The which the keen sword spurned its sheath.  
Under the flags that first were woven  
    To bring the fire to stranger eyes;  
That now, at cost of corselets cloven,  
    In lines of tattered trophies rise.  
To greet the newly come they wait —  
The heroes of the German State:

His father, unto whom the west wind blew  
The echo of the guns of Waterloo:  
That greater FREDERICK, with the lust of power  
    Still smoldering in his eyes, his troubled heart  
Impatient with the briefness of his hour  
    That altered Europe's chart:  
And he, the Great Elector, he who first  
    Sounded to Poland's King a nation's word:

And he who, earlier, by Rome accursed,  
    The trumpet-tone of Martin Luther heard —  
    So the long line of faces grim  
    Grows faint and dim,  
And at the farther end, where lights burn low,  
    Where, through a misty glow,  
Heroes of German song and story rise  
    Gods to our eyes,  
Great HERMANN rises, father of a race,  
To give the Emperor his place.

## ROWEN

"Come to the table's head,  
Among the ennobled dead!"

He cries: "Nor none shall ask me of thy right."

Then speaks he to the board:

"Bow down, in one accord,  
To him whose strength is Majesty, not Might.

"Emperor and King he comes; his people's cry  
Pierces our distant sky;

Emperor and King he comes, whose mighty hand  
Gathered in one the kingdoms of the land.

Yet greater far the tale shall be

That gains him immortality:

To his high task no selfish thought,

No coward hesitance he brought;

All that it was to be a King

He was, nor counted of the cost.

He rounds our circle — Time may bring

The day when Earth shall need no King —

All that Kings were, in him Earth lost."

"*Hail, Hohenzollern, hail!*" cried the heroes dead;  
And the gray Emperor sat at the table's head.

## GENERAL SHERMAN

FEBRUARY 14, 1891

BOWED banners and the drums' thick muffled beat  
For him, and silent crowds along the street;  
The stripes of white and crimson on his breast,  
And all the trapping of a warrior's rest;  
For him the wail of dirges, and the tread  
Of the vast army following its dead  
Unto the great surrender; half-mast high  
For him the flags shall brave the winter sky —  
These be his honors: and some old eyes dim  
For love's sake, more than fame's — for him, for him!

These things are his; yet not to him alone  
Is this proud wealth of ordered honor shown.  
Thus to their graves may go all men who stand  
Between their country and the foeman's brand:  
This is the meed of hardihood in fight,  
The formal tribute to a hero's might.  
A myriad dead have won the like award —  
The unknown, unnumbered servants of the sword.  
Hath he no greater honor?

Yes, although  
It win for his dead clay no funeral show,  
Nor none shall tell upon the market-place  
What gave this hero his most special grace,  
That for his memory, in the years to come,  
Shall speak more loud than voice of gun or drum.

## ROWEN

Great was his soul in fight. But you and I,  
Friend, if need be, can set a face to die.  
This land of ours has lovers now as then,  
Nor shall time coming find her poor in men,  
While the strong blood of our old Saxon strain  
Fires at the sound of war in pulse and vein.

But this great warrior was in Peace more great,  
More noble in his fealty to the state,  
More fine in service, in a subtler way  
Meeting the vital duty of the day;  
Patient and calm, too simply proud to strive  
To keep the glory of his past alive.  
So burns it still, and shall burn. Every year  
Of that high service made him but more dear,  
More trusted, more revered. No lust of power  
Led him to lengthen out the battle hour;  
He sought no office; he would learn no art  
To serve him at the polls or in the mart;  
And yet he loved the people, nor did pride  
Lead him from common joys and cares aside.  
His kindly, homely, grizzled face looked down  
On all the merrymaking of the town —  
A face that we shall miss: we all were proud  
When the Old General smiled upon the crowd.  
So lived, so died he. Has a great man passed  
And left a life more whole unto the last?

Upon the soldier's coffin let this wreath  
Tell of his greatest greatness, sword-in-sheath.

## LEOPOLD DAMROSCH

FEBRUARY 15, 1885

WAKED at the waving of thy hand, so near  
Came music to the language of the soul —  
Not viol alone, or flute: an ordered whole,  
That with one voice spoke to us, subtly clear —  
So near it came to all that life holds dear,  
So full it was of messages that stole  
Silently to the spirit — of the roll  
Of thunders that the heart leaped up to hear —  
That we, who look upon the fallen hand  
That shall not rise for music's sake again  
Upon this earth — we, lingering, well may deem  
Thee glad with a great joy, to understand,  
At last, the full and all-revealing strain  
That tells what earthly music may but dream.



J. B.

JUNE 7, 1880

THE Actor 's dead, and memory alone  
Recalls the genial magic of his tone;  
Marble nor canvas nor the printed page  
Shall tell his genius to another age:  
A memory, doomed to dwindle less and less,  
His world-wide fame shrinks to this littleness.  
Yet if, a half a century from to-day,  
A tender smile about our old lips play,  
And if our grandchild query whence it came,  
We 'll say: "A thought of Brougham." —  
And that is Fame!



*I serve with love a goodly craft,  
And proud thereat am I;  
And, if I do but work aright,  
Shall never wholly die.*



## MY SHAKSPERE

WITH beveled binding, with uncut edge,  
    With broad white margin and gilded top,  
Fit for my library's choicest ledge,  
    Fresh from the bindery, smelling of shop,  
In tinted cloth, with a strange design —  
    Buskin and scroll-work and mask and crown,  
    And an arabesque legend tumbling down —  
"The Works of Shakspeare" were never so fine.  
Fresh from the shop! I turn the page —  
    Its "ample margin" is wide and fair,  
    Its type is chosen with daintiest care;  
    There's a "New French Elzevir" strutting there  
That would shame its prototypic age.  
Fresh from the shop! O Shakspeare mine,  
I've half a notion you're much too fine!

There's an ancient volume that I recall,  
    In foxy leather much chafed and worn;  
Its back is broken by many a fall,  
    The stitches are loose and the leaves are torn;  
And gone is the bastard title, next  
    To the title-page scribbled with owners' names,  
    That in straggling old-style type proclaims  
That the work is from the corrected text  
    Left by the late Geo. Steevens, Esquire.

## ROWEN

The broad sky burns like a great blue fire,  
And the Lake shines blue as shimmering steel,  
And it cuts the horizon like a blade;  
And behind the poplar 's a strip of shade —  
The great tall Lombardy on the lawn.  
And, lying there in the grass, I feel  
The wind that blows from the Canada shore,  
And in cool, sweet puffs comes stealing o'er,  
Fresh as any October dawn.

I lie on my breast in the grass, my feet  
Lifted boy-fashion, and swinging free,  
The old brown Shakspeare in front of me.  
And big are my eyes, and my heart 's a-beat;  
And my whole soul 's lost — in what? — who knows?  
Perdita's charms or Perdita's woes —  
Perdita fairy-like, fair and sweet.  
Is any one jealous, I wonder, now,  
Of my love for Perdita? For I vow  
I loved her well. And who can say  
That life would be quite the same life to-day —  
That Love would mean so much, if she  
Had not taught me its A B C?

The Grandmother, thin and bent and old,  
But her hair still dark and her eyes still bright,  
Totters around among the flowers —  
Old-fashioned flowers of pink and white;  
And turns with a trowel the dark rich mold  
That feeds the blooms of her heart's delight.  
Ah me! for her and for me the hours

## ROWEN

Go by, and for her the smell of earth —  
And for me the breeze and a far love's birth,  
    And the sun and the sky and all the things  
    That a boy's heart hopes and a poet sings.

Fresh from the shop! O Shakspeare mine,  
It was n't the binding made you divine!  
I knew you first in a foxy brown,  
In the old, old home, where I laid me down,  
    In the idle summer afternoons,  
With you alone in the odorous grass,  
    And set your thoughts to the wind's low tunes,  
And saw your children rise up and pass —  
And dreamed and dreamed of the things to be,  
Known only, I think, to you and me.

I've hardly a heart for you dressed so fine —  
Fresh from the shop, O Shakspeare mine!

ON SEEING MAURICE LELOIR'S  
ILLUSTRATIONS TO STERNE'S  
"SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY"

LELOIR, what kinship lies between you two —  
This century-vanished Englishman and you? —  
You who can lead us, grateful in surprise,  
All that he saw to see with trusting eyes —  
Nay, at your beck his head peeps, gaunt and hoar,  
Out of the window in the po'chaise door.

Is it not this: birth made him of your race  
(Though Clonmel and not Calais were the place,)  
If heart and fancy be the best of birth?

Some day, Leloir, your spirit, freed from earth,  
Walking that special heaven set apart  
For those who made religion of their art,  
Will meet this elder friend, and he will turn  
And speak to you in French — this Laurence Sterne.



## TO A READER OF THE XXI<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

YOU, when you read this book, shall find  
How You or We have fallen behind.  
Where'er you be, I know you not;  
But, if my memory be forgot,  
Remember, proud of life and thought  
Though *You* may strut, *I* hold you naught.  
You *are* not yet — you *may be* — still,  
How do I know you ever *will* ?

But yet I hope, in future days,  
You may exist, to cast your gaze  
Round some old bibliomaniac's room,  
Shrouded in sober russet gloom,  
And let it fall upon this book;  
Then turn this page — I'll catch your look.

Aye! though the while this line you read  
A coverlet of daisy brede  
Shall lie my old-time bed above  
And all that was my life and love;  
I speak to you from out a day  
When *I*, not *You*, can see the Play,  
And find the stage's mimicry  
More real than are *You* to *Me*.  
When blood went slipping through this heart,  
I saw it all — I was a part.

## ROWEN

This is our day — you turn the page,  
And see the pictures of our age.  
“A treasure!” cries your bibliopole,  
With fervor in his musty soul:  
“A Daly private print — a chaste  
Example of our fathers’ taste.  
They made books *then* — who can, in our  
Degenerate days of — magnet — power?  
See — Ada Rehan, Fisher, Drew,  
Dame Gilbert, Lewis — through and through  
The sharp-cut plates are clear as new!”  
Then comes the old, the tardy praise —  
“Those were the drama’s palmy days.”

But We? You ’ll see the shadow — now  
To us these living creatures bow,  
For us they smile — for us they feign  
Or love or hatred, joy or pain;  
For us this white breast heaves — this voice  
Makes hearts too young too much rejoice;  
For us those splendid eyes are lit;  
For us awakes embodied wit;  
For us the music and the light —  
The listening faces, flushed and bright;  
The glow, the passion, and the dream —  
To you — how far it all must seem!

You know the names — but we behold,  
In sweet old age that is not old,  
Though Time play tricks with face and hair,  
Our Gentlewoman past compare.

## ROWEN

We see her deftly thread the set  
Old figures of the minuet;  
We see her Partner's snow-crowned face  
Bent o'er her hand in antique grace.

You know the names — before our eyes  
Proud Katherine's anger flames and dies;  
For us Petruchio pays his court;  
For us the high tempestuous port,  
Lowered at last in humble, sweet  
Submission at a husband's feet.  
You know the names — but ah! who hears  
The laughter when one face appears?

You know the names — but what are they?  
We know the folk that make the Play!  
Love's merry Up, Love's doleful Down,  
The fickle fashion of the town  
Take form and shape for us, and show  
To heart and eye the world we know.

You have the pictures, and the names  
That are but Yours as they are Fame's;  
See them, O dim Potential Shade,  
Even as we see them now arrayed:  
Try to put nature's vital hue  
Into the faces that you view;  
And think, while Fancy labors thus,  
This all is breathing Life to Us.

## FOR AN OLD POET

WHEN he is old and past all singing,  
Grant, kindly Time, that he may hear  
The rhythm through joyous Nature ringing,  
Uncaught by any duller ear.

Grant that, in memory's deeps still cherished,  
Once more may murmur low to him  
The winds that sung in years long perished,  
Lit by the suns of days grown dim.

Grant that the hours when first he listened  
To bird-songs manhood may not know,  
In fields whose dew for lovers glistened,  
May come back to him ere he go.

Grant only this, O Time most kindly,  
That he may hear the song you sung  
When love was new — and, harkening blindly,  
Feign his o'er-wearied spirit young.

With sound of rivers singing round him,  
On waves that long since flowed away,  
Oh, leave him, Time, where first Love found him,  
Dreaming To-morrow in To-day!

## WILKIE COLLINS

SEPTEMBER 23, 1889

WHEN Arabs sat around  
And heard the Thousand Nights —  
Beyond the tent's close bound,  
Beyond the watch-fire lights —  
Their believing spirits flew  
To a land where strange things seem  
As simple things and true,  
And the best truth is a dream.

And when the tale was told —  
Genie and Princess fair  
Brought to an end — their gold  
They sought, with an absent air;  
And dropped it at His feet  
Who had led to the land of Delight;  
And, dreaming of Princesses sweet,  
They passed out into the night.

So, still under your spell,  
Teller of magic tales,  
These lines I would fain let tell  
The debt whose payment fails.  
Take them: if they were gold  
'T would but discharge a due —  
And, for the tales you told,  
I shall remember you.

## FOR C. J. T., CONCERNING A. D.

HERE shall you see the sweetest mind  
That loves our simpler humankind:  
The things that touch your heart and mine  
He knows by sympathy so fine  
That he, an alien, over sea,  
Partner in our best thought can be.  
Not the ATLANTIC'S swell and moan  
Can part his fancy from our own.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

See but a child with wistful eyes  
THE DOCTOR'S gloomy windows rise,  
And that sad comedy is played  
That makes us love one little maid:  
See the kind face we children knew,  
And PRUDENCE is our "Aunty," too;  
Think of the madcap loves of youth,  
And think of BELL, LOUISE, and RUTH:  
Think of the loves not Love, alas!  
And of ROSINE in Mont Parnasse:  
Dream of the things most sweet and true  
That your best moments bring to you,  
And find this gentle Poet's art  
Voices the thought that stirred your heart.

## EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

THOUGH to his song the reeds respondent rustle  
That cradled Pan what time all song was young,  
Though in a new world city's restless bustle  
He sounds a lyre in fields Sicilian strung;  
Though his the power the days of old to waken,  
Though Nature's melody 's as clear to him  
As ere of dryads were the woods forsaken,  
And the fresh world of myth grew faint and dim —  
A dearer grace is his when men's eyes glisten  
With closer sympathies his page above,  
And near his spirit draws to hearts that listen  
The song that sweetly rounds with Home and Love.

NEW YORK, *December* 10, 1884.

## AN EPISTLE

TO MASTER BRANDER MATTHEWS, WRITER, ON THE  
OCCASION OF HIS PUTTING FORTH A BOOK  
ENTITLED "PEN AND INK"

NEW LONDON, CONN., SEPT. 10, 1888.

*Dear Brander:*

*I have known thee long, and found  
Thee wise in council, and of judgment sound;  
Steadfast in friendship, sound and clear in wit,  
And more in virtues than may here be writ.  
But most I joy, in these machine-made days,  
To see thee constant in a craftsman's ways;  
That the plain tool that knew thy 'prentice hand  
Gathers no rust upon thy writing-stand;  
That no Invention saves the labor due  
To any Task that 's worth the going through;  
That now when butter snubs the stranger churn,  
Plain pen and ink still serve a writer's turn.  
Though I, more firmly orthodox, still hold,  
In dire default of quills, to steel or gold,  
And though thy pen be rubber — let it pass —  
A breath of blemish on thy soul's clear glass.*

*There is no "writing fluid" in thy pot,  
But honest ink of nutgall brew, God wot!  
Thou dost not an electric needle ply,  
And, like a housewife with an apple-pie,*



## ROWEN

*Prick thy fair page into a stencil-plate —  
Then daub with lampblack for a duplicate.  
Nor thine the sloven page whereon the shirk  
With the rough tool attempts the finished work,  
And introduces to the sight of men  
The Valet Pencil for the Master Pen.  
Not all like thee, in this uneasy age,  
When more by trick than toil we earn our wage!  
Here by the sea a gentle poet dwells,  
And in fair leisure weaves his magic spells;  
And yet doth dare with countenance serene  
To weave them on a tinkling steel machine,  
Where an impertinent and soulless bell  
Rings, at each finished line, a jangling knell.  
The muse and I, we love him, and I think  
She may forgive his slight to pen and ink,  
And let no dull mechanic cam or cog  
The lightsome movement of his metres clog;  
But oh! I grieve to see his fingers toy  
With this base slave in dalliance close and coy,  
While in his standish dries the atrid spring  
Where hides the shyer muse that loves to sing.  
Give me the old-time ink, black, flowing, free,  
And give, oh, give! the old goose-quill to me —  
The goose-quill, whispering of humility.  
It whispers to the bard: "Fly not too high!  
You flap your wings — remember, so could I.  
I cackled in my life-time, it is true;  
But yet again remember, so do You.  
And there were some things possible to me  
That possible to you will never be.*

## ROWEN

*I stood for hours on one columnar leg,  
And, if my sex were such, could lay an egg.  
Oh, well for you, if you could thus beget  
Material for your morning omelette;  
Or, if things came to such a desperate pass,  
You could in calm contentment nibble grass!  
Conceited bard! and can you sink to rest  
Upon the feather-pillow of your breast?"*

*Hold, my dear Brander, to your pot of ink:  
The muse sits poised upon that fountain's brink.  
And that you long may live to hold a pen  
I 'll breathe a prayer;  
The world will say "Amen!"*

## ON READING CERTAIN PUBLISHED LETTERS OF W. M. T.

It is as though the gates of heaven swung,  
Once only, backward, and a spirit shone  
Upon us, with a face to which there clung  
Naught of that mortal veil which sore belies,  
But looked such love from such high-changed eyes,  
That, even from earth, we knew them for his own.

Knew them for his, and marveled; for he came  
Among us, and went from us, and we knew  
Only the smoke and ash that hid the flame,  
Only the cloak and vestment of his soul;  
And knew his priesthood only by his stole —  
And, thus unknown, he went his journey through.

Yet there were some who knew him, though his face  
Was never seen by them; although his hand  
Lay never warm in theirs, they yet had grace  
To see, past all misjudgment; his true heart  
Throbbled for them in the creatures of his art,  
And they could read his words, and understand.

All men may know him now, and know how kind  
The hand in chastisement so sure and strong —  
All men may know him now, and dullards blind  
Into the secrets of his soul may see;  
And all shall love — but, Steadfast Greatheart, we,  
We knew thee when the wide world did thee wrong.



*Says the Man in the Moon, "It's a fine world there";  
But he wonders how it can please us  
To walk with our heads hanging down in the air —  
For that is the way he sees us.*



## CHAKEY EINSTEIN

PHARAOH, King of Egypt's land,  
Held you in his cruel hand,  
Till the Appointed of the Lord  
Led you forth and drowned his horde.  
Cushan, Eglon's Moabites,  
Jabin, then the Midianites,  
Ammonite and Philistine  
Held you, by decree divine.  
Shishak spoiled you — but the list  
Fades in dim tradition's mist —  
And on history's page we see  
One long tale of misery,  
Century after century through —  
Chains and lashes for the Jew.  
Haman and Antiochus,  
Herod, Roman Socius,  
Spoiled you, crushed you, various ways,  
Till the dawn of Christian days;  
Since which time your wrongs and shame  
Have remained about the same.  
Whipped and chained, your teeth pulled out;  
English cat and Russian knout  
Made familiar with your back —  
When you were n't upon the rack —  
Marked for scorn of Christian men;  
Pilfered, taxed, and taxed again;

## ROWEN

Pilloried, prisoned, burnt and stoned,  
Stripped of even the clothes you owned;  
Child of Torture, Son of Shame,  
Robbed of even a father's name —  
In this year of Christian grace,  
What 's your state and what 's your place?  
Why you 're rich and strong and gay —  
Chakey Einstein, owff Browdway!

Myriad signs along the street  
Israelitish names repeat.  
Lichtenstein and Morgenroth  
Sell the pants and sell the coat;  
Minzesheimer, Isaacs, Meyer,  
Levy, Lehman, Simon, Speyer —  
These may just suggest a few  
Specimens of Broadway Jew —  
And these gentlemen have made  
Quite their own the Dry-gootz Trade.  
Surely you 're on top to-day,  
Chakey Einstein, owff Browdway.

Fat and rich you are, and loud:  
Fond of being in a crowd;  
Fond of diamonds and rings;  
Fond of haberdashers' things;  
Fond of color, fond of noise;  
Fond of treating "owl der boys"  
(Yet, it 's only fair to state,  
For yourself, most temperate);  
Fond of women, fond of song;



## ROWEN

Fond of bad cigars, and strong;  
Fond, too much, of Brighton's Race  
(Where you 're wholly out of place,  
For no Jew in Time's long course  
Knew one thing about a horse);  
Fond of life, and fond of fun  
(Once your "beezness" wholly done);  
Open-handed, generous, free,  
Full of Christian charity  
(Far more full than he who pokes  
At your avarice his jokes);  
Fond of friends, and ever kind  
To the sick and lame and blind  
(And, though loud you else may be,  
Silent in your charity);  
Fond of Mrs. Einstein and  
Her too-numerous infant band,  
Ever willing they should share  
Your enjoyment everywhere —  
What of you is left to say,  
Chakey Einstein, owff Browdway?

Though you 're spurned in some hotels,  
You have kin among the swells —  
Great musicians, poets true,  
Painters, singers not a few,  
Own their cousinship to you:  
And all England, so they say,  
Yearly blooms on Primrose Day  
All in memory of a Jew  
Of the self-same race as you;

## ROWEN

Greatest leader ever known  
Since the Queen came to her throne;  
Bismarck's only equal foe,  
With a thrust for every blow,  
One who rose from place to place  
To lead the Anglo-Saxon race,  
One whose statecraft wise and keen  
Made an Empress of a Queen —  
*You* 've your share in Primrose Day,  
Chakey Einstein, owff Browdway!

Well, good friend, we look at you  
And behold the Conquering Jew:  
In despite of all the years  
Filled with agonies and fears;  
In despite of stake and chain;  
In despite of Rome and Spain;  
'Spite of prison, rack, and lash,  
You are here, and you 've the cash:  
You are Trade's uncrownèd king —  
You are mostly everything —  
Only one small joke, O Jew!  
Has the Christian world on you —  
When your son, your first-born boy,  
Solomon, your fond heart's joy,  
Grows to manhood's years, he 'll wed  
One a Christian born and bred;  
Blue of blood, of lineage old,  
Who will take him for his gold —  
That 's not all — so far the joke  
Is upon the Christian folk.

## ROWEN

But, dear Chakey, when he goes  
In his proper Sabbath clo'es,  
To the House of Worship, he  
And his little family,  
He will pass the synagogue,  
And upon his way will jog  
To a Church, wherein his pew  
Will bear a name unknown to you —  
One quite unknown in old B'nai B'rith —  
Eynston maybe — maybe Smith.  
That 's just as sure as day is day —  
Chakey Einstein, owff Browdway!

## A FABLE FOR RULERS

(FROM THE FRENCH)

A KING of Persia, once upon a day,  
Rode with his courtiers to the chase away.  
Thirst o'ertook him in a desert plain,  
Where he sought a cooling fount in vain.  
Last he chanced upon a garden fine,  
Rich in luscious orange, grape, and pine:  
"God forbid my thirst I slake!"  
Quoth he, "for the owner's sake.  
For if to pluck one single fruit I dare,  
These my viziers will lay the garden bare."

## BISMARCK SOLILOQUIZES

THE German Emperor — that 's his title — not  
The one that (thanks to me) his Grandsire got —  
Emperor of Germany served his father's turn;  
'T will not serve his. Well, well, we live and learn.  
I, in my age, have learned one certain thing:  
Who makes a king shall perish by a king.

What else should come of making kings? The best  
Is but a Policy in purple drest.  
I hatched this Policy within my brain:  
But shall it hatch a Policy again?  
I made an Emperor; made his heir, and he  
Has made an Emperor to make mock of me.

Is this the way God laughs at men? to spoil  
Their work, and bring to nothingness their toil?  
To give the seed, the wit to make it grow,  
Patience to nurse this tree till blossoms blow,  
To lend the fatness of the labored land,  
And turn the fruit to dust within the hand?  
If so — His ways shall not be understood —  
Let me laugh, too. Surely the jest is good.  
I have time for laughing now. In days gone by  
We had no laughing-times, my kings and I:  
Nor did I dream such gratitude was theirs  
To save my latter years from statecraft's cares,

## ROWEN

And let me sit in calm retirement down  
To watch a youthful Emperor play the clown!

Right well you play it, William mine — how well,  
It takes a critic old as I to tell.

No madder jest a merry mind could plan  
Than Kings coquetting with the Laboring Man.

A gay conceit, indeed, it seems to me —  
That Congress, summoned by your high degree  
To view the woes of man, and find a cure  
For you to guarantee as swift and sure.

Nor did your humor miss a happy chance  
When you dispatched your Mother into France.

Of course, to give the joke its subtle sting,  
A Grandmother would be the proper thing.

Still, 't was amusing — and instructive, since  
It shows just what can make a Frenchman wince,  
Make his lip quiver and his thin cheek blanch —  
A conqueror's widow with an olive branch.

Oh, had she gone — the jest to carry through —  
To see if sparks still lingered at St. Cloud!

Play your game out, boy: I will look and laugh.  
Thresh over the poor wheat I threshed to chaff.

Learn the hard lesson I so long have known,  
That steel 's the only metal for a throne.

You are — your guns, and nothing else on earth,  
Except the brutal accident of birth.

Think you the golden years will come again  
When the poor peasants, fleeing from the plain,  
Huddled beneath the castle walls, stretched hands  
To pray the War Lord to protect their lands

## ROWEN

Against the alien plunderer, kissed the sod,  
And thought him regent of Almighty God?  
Why, child, that dogma of your heaven-sent right  
Is, in this day, a mere excuse polite,  
For owning cannon; and the more you own  
The more divine your right is to the throne.  
Think you these people whose intelligence  
Fills you with proud paternal confidence  
Have learned — you let them learn — to write and read,  
To find out ways of bettering their breed —  
Yet hold themselves still made for you to bleed?  
And does the spider educate the fly,  
Teaching him: "By this belly know that I  
Can chain you; this my glittering web is set  
To hold your feet fast in a sticky net.  
So, now, walk in, I pray. Divinest Right  
Has given me a pretty appetite!"  
Madman and babe — you send your fly to school;  
And then expect your fly to be your fool!

Play on, play on! *I* kept your "right" alive;  
*I* made a medieval dogma thrive  
On barren modern soil; but *my* War Lord  
In one hand bore a whip; in one a sword.  
His Right men held Divine; his title clear —  
Through gratitude? through love? — hope? —  
Fool! through Fear!

## IMITATION

My love she leans from the window  
Afar in a rosy land;  
And red as a rose are her blushes,  
And white as a rose her hand.

And the roses cluster around her,  
And mimic her tender grace;  
And nothing but roses can blossom  
Wherever she shows her face.

I dwell in a land of winter,  
From my love a world apart —  
But the snow blooms over with roses  
At the thought of her in my heart.

\* \* \* \* \*

This German style of poem  
Is uncommonly popular now;  
For the worst of us poets can do it —  
Since Heine showed us how.



## “MAGDALENA”

SAT we 'neath the dark verandah,  
Years and years ago;  
And I softly pressed a hand a  
Deal more white than snow.  
And I cast aside my *reina*,  
As I gazed upon her face,  
And I read her “Magdalena,”  
While she smoothed her Spanish lace —  
Read her Waller’s “Magdalena” —  
She had Magdalena’s grace.  
Read her of the Spanish duel,  
Of the brother, courtly, cruel,  
Who between the British wooer  
And the Seville lady came;  
How her lover promptly slew her  
Brother, and then fled in shame —  
How he dreamed, in long years after,  
Of the river’s rippling laughter —  
Of the love he used to know  
In the myrtle-curtained villa  
Near the city of Sevilla  
Years and years ago.

Ah, how warmly was I reading,  
As I gazed upon her face!  
And my voice took tones of pleading,  
For I sought to win her grace.

## ROWEN

Surely, thought I, in her veins  
Runs some drop of foreign strains —  
There is something half Castilian  
In that lip that shames vermillion;  
In that mass of raven tresses,  
Tossing like a falcon's jesses;  
In that eye with trailing lashes,  
And its witching upward flashes —  
Such, indeed, I know,  
Shone where Guadalquivir splashes  
Years and years ago.

Looking in her face I read it —  
How the metre trips! —  
And the god of lovers sped it  
On my happy lips —  
All those words of mystic sweetness  
Spoke I with an airy neatness,  
As I never had before —  
As I cannot speak them more —  
Reja, plaza, and mantilla,  
"No palabras" and Sevilla,  
Caballero and sombrero,  
And duenna and Duero,  
Spada, señor, sabe Dios —  
Smooth as pipe of Melibœus —  
Ah, how very well I read it,  
Looking in her lovely eyes!  
When 't was o'er, I looked for credit,  
As she softly moved to rise.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ROWEN

Doting dream, ah, dream fallacious —

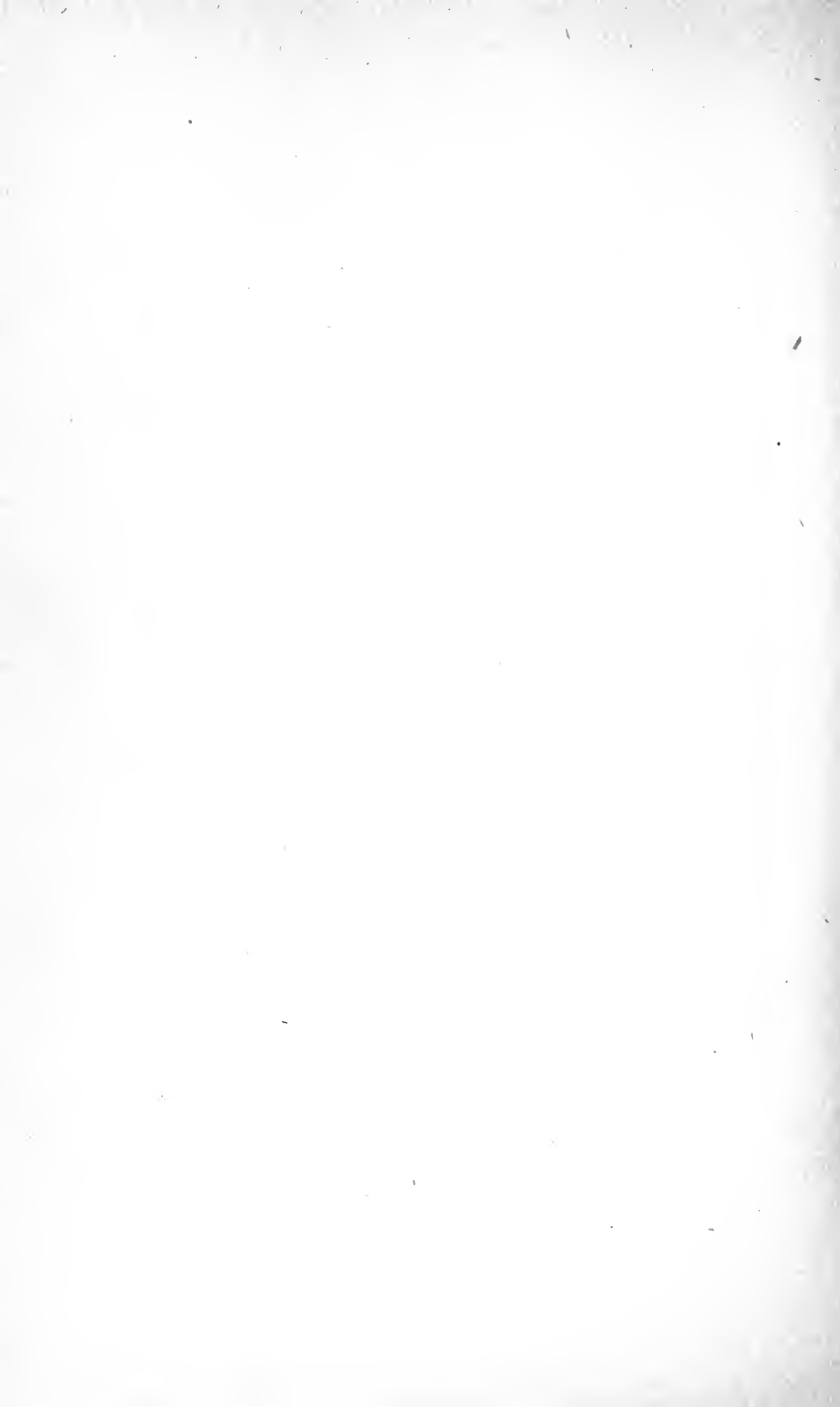
Years and years ago! —

For she only said: "My gracious —

What a lot of French you know!"



*May the light of some morning skies  
In days when the sun knew how to rise,  
Stay with my spirit until I go  
To be the boy that I used to know.*



## **"ONE, TWO, THREE!"**

It was an old, old, old, old lady,  
And a boy that was half-past three;  
And the way that they played together  
Was beautiful to see.

She could n't go running and jumping,  
And the boy, no more could he;  
For he was a thin little fellow,  
With a thin little twisted knee.

They sat in the yellow sunlight,  
Out under the maple-tree;  
And the game that they played I'll tell you,  
Just as it was told to me.

It was Hide-and-Go-Seek they were playing,  
Though you 'd never have known it to be —  
With an old, old, old, old lady,  
And a boy with a twisted knee.

The boy would bend his face down  
On his one little sound right knee,  
And he 'd guess where she was hiding,  
In guesses One, Two, Three!

## ROWEN

"You are in the china-closet!"

He would cry, and laugh with glee —  
It was n't the china-closet;  
But he still had Two and Three.

"You are up in Papa's big bedroom,  
In the chest with the queer old key!"  
And she said: "You are *warm* and *warmer*;  
But you're not quite right," said she.

"It can't be the little cupboard  
Where Mama's things used to be —  
So it must be the clothes-press, Gran'ma!"  
And he found her with his Three.

Then she covered her face with her fingers,  
That were wrinkled and white and wee,  
And she guessed where the boy was hiding,  
With a One and a Two and a Three.

And they never had stirred from their places,  
Right under the maple-tree —  
This old, old, old, old lady,  
And the boy with the lame little knee —  
This dear, dear, dear old lady,  
And the boy who was half-past three.



## THE LITTLE SHOP

*Air: The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington*

I KNOW a shop, and a funny little shop,  
In a street that lies anigh;  
And I saw the sign set on the door,  
One day as I went by.  
And oh! it was so poor and small  
I could not help but stop,  
As you would stop, if you should come  
On such a little shop.

I went inside, and found a little boy,  
Far older, I am sure, than I;  
He said to me: "Kind sir, what toy  
Will you kindly be pleased to buy?"  
And I bought a horse that was painted so red  
As never was charger yet;  
One penny, one penny was all I paid  
That splendid horse to get.

For pity of them that were so poor  
I bought me a host of things:  
A Noah's Ark without a roof;  
A dove without its wings;  
A little trumpet made of tin,  
That cost a single cent —  
And all the time that little boy  
Knew just how my money went.

## ROWEN

He was, oh ! so old, this funny little boy,  
And so sober and so kind:  
He sold a five-cent doll for three,  
Because one eye was blind.  
And, oh ! how proud he was to sell  
Each poor and petty toy,  
For he was left to keep the shop,  
This poor little old-time boy.

There is a babe, and a well-beloved babe,  
A babe that belongs to me;  
I brought her home these penny toys  
To deck her Christmas tree.  
And on that Christmas tree there hung  
A world of trifles fair,  
For all the folk that love her well  
Had set their kindness there.

But of all the toys, of all the many toys,  
Was naught that pleased her mind  
Except the trumpet made of tin,  
And the doll with one eye blind.  
And best of all that Christmas brought,  
She held one little toy  
That I bought for a cent in the little shop,  
To please that aged boy.

## GRANDFATHER WATTS'S PRIVATE FOURTH

GRANDFATHER WATTS used to tell us boys  
That a Fourth wa'n't a Fourth without any noise.  
He would say, with a thump of his hickory stick,  
That it made an American right down *sick*  
To see his sons on the Nation's Day  
Sit round, in a sort of a listless way,  
With no oration and no train-band,  
No fire-work show and no root-beer stand;  
While his grandsons, before they were out of bibs,  
Were ashamed — Great Scott! — to fire off squibs.

And so, each Independence morn,  
Grandfather Watts took his powder-horn,  
And the flint-lock shot-gun *his* father had  
When he fought under Schuyler, a country lad;  
And Grandfather Watts would start and tramp  
Ten miles to the woods at Beaver Camp;  
For Grandfather Watts used to say — and scowl —  
That a decent chipmunk, or woodchuck, or owl  
Was better company, friendly or shy,  
Than folks who did n't keep Fourth of July.  
And so he would pull his hat down on his brow,  
And march for the woods, sou'-east by sou'.

But once — ah, long, long years ago, —  
For Grandfather's gone where good men ago, —

## ROWEN

One hot, hot Fourth, by ways of our own  
(Such short-cuts as boys have always known),  
We hurried, and followed the dear old man  
Beyond where the wilderness began —  
To the deep black woods at the foot of the Hump;  
And there was a clearing — and a stump.

A stump in the heart of a great wide wood,  
And there on that stump our Grandfather stood,  
Talking and shouting out there in the sun,  
And firing that funny old flint-lock gun  
Once in a minute — his head all bare —  
Having his Fourth of July out there:  
The Fourth of July that he used to know,  
Back in eighteen-and-twenty or so!

First, with his face to the heavens blue,  
He read the "Declaration" through;  
And then, with gestures to left and right,  
He made an oration erudite,  
Full of words six syllables long —  
And then our Grandfather burst into song!  
And, scaring the squirrels in the trees,  
Gave "Hail, Columbia!" to the breeze.

*And I tell you the old man never heard  
When we joined in the chorus, word for word!  
But he sang out strong to the bright blue sky;  
And if voices joined in his Fourth of July,  
He heard them as echoes from days gone by.*

## ROWEN

And when he had done, we all slipped back,  
As still as we came, on our twisting track,  
While words more clear than the flint-lock shots  
Rang in our ears.

And Grandfather Watts?

He shouldered the gun his father bore,  
And marched off home, nor'-west by nor'.

## TO MY DAUGHTER

### CONCERNING A BUNCH OF BLOSSOMS

THE blossoms she gave him — indeed, they were fair;  
And grateful the odor they cast on the air;  
And he put them in water, and set them anigh  
His little round window that looked on the sky.  
And the blush of those blossoms, their pleasant perfume,  
Made a sweet little spot in that dull little room —  
Made a sweet little spot for a day and an hour;  
Then —

Well, little Lil. what 's the fate of a flower?

The blossoms she gave him — indeed, they were fair;  
But I think that the least of the giving was there,  
In that vase by the window — the look in her face —  
Her tender and youthful and delicate grace —  
The voice that just trembled in gentle replies,  
The look and the light in her uplifted eyes —  
Ah! these to my thinking were dearer by far  
Than ever the fairest of May-blossoms are.

The blossoms she gave him — you ask, little Lil,  
With a lip that is quivering and blue eyes that fill —  
If they faded?

They did — but there 's no need to cry!  
For they blossomed again where I can't have them  
die —

## ROWEN

These roseate tints on your soft little cheek,  
In a manner mysterious certainly speak  
Of a bunch of pink blossoms, fresh torn from the tree,  
That in eighteen-and-eighty your mother gave me.

## SCHUBERT'S KINDER-SCENEN

THE spirit of the Ingle Nook  
Has come to lead me forth,  
To wonder at the leaping brook —  
The wind from out the north.

To wander with Haroun the Great  
Through groves of Eastern scent;  
To watch beyond the garden gate  
The birds fly, heavenward bent;

To lie amid the grass, and dream  
Each slim and spreading spire  
A tufted palm, lit by the gleam  
Of distant heavens' fire.

To dream and dream of things beyond  
The gate — beyond to-day —  
Until upon the miller's pond  
The low red light shall play.

And then, when all my dreams shall swim  
To murmuring of the brook,  
I shall be led from twilight dim  
Back to the Ingle Nook.



**BALLADS OF THE TOWN  
AND LATER LYRICS**

[1896]



**BALLADS OF THE TOWN**



## I. THE MAID OF MURRAY HILL

SAINT VALENTINE, Saint Valentine!

I love a maid of New York town,  
And every day, on my homeward way,  
She walks the Avenue down.

At five o'clock, dear Saint, she goes  
Tripping down Murray Hill,  
And the hands of the clock in the old brick spire  
Stand still, stand still, stand still!

Saint Valentine, Saint Valentine!

Oh, could you know how fair a maid —  
So trim of dress, and so gold of tress,  
You 'd know why I 'm afraid.  
I see her pass, I smile and bow,  
As I go up Murray Hill,  
And I say to a foolish hope of mine:  
Be still, be still, be still!

Saint Valentine, Saint Valentine,

Oh, could you see how close her gown  
Binds tight and warm about her form,  
This maid of New York town,  
You 'd know a mountain would to me  
Be less than Murray Hill,  
If only around her my arm could slip,  
And she 'd stand still, stand still.

## BALLADS OF THE TOWN

Saint Valentine, Saint Valentine!

She is so fair, so rich, so great,  
I have no right to think what might

Be this poor clerk's estate.

And yet the bells in yon brick spire

As we pass on Murray Hill,

They ring, they ring — she 's not for me —

And still — and still — and still —

## II. THE FRIVOLOUS GIRL

HER silken gown it rustles  
As she goes down the stair;  
And in all the place there 's ne'er a face  
One half, one half so fair.  
*But, oh! I saw her yesterday —  
And no one knew 't was she —  
When a little sick child looked up and smiled  
As she sat on my lady's knee.*

Her fan it flirts and flutters,  
Her eyes grow bright — grow dim —  
And all around no man is found  
But thinks she thinks of him.  
*But, oh! to her the best of all,  
Though they be great and grand,  
Are less than the sick whose smiles come quick  
At the touch of my lady's hand.*

Her little shoe of satin  
Peeps underneath her skirt —  
And a foot so small ought never at all  
To move in mire and dirt.  
*But, oh! she goes among the poor,  
And heavy hearts rejoice —  
As they can tell who know her well —  
To hear my lady's voice.*

## BALLADS OF THE TOWN

Her glove is soft as feathers  
Upon the nestling dove;  
Its touch so light I have no right  
To think, to dream of love —  
*But, oh! when, clad in simplest garb,  
She goes where none may see,  
I watch, and pray that some happy day  
My lady may pity ME.*



### III. KITTY'S SUMMERING

HAVE you seen e'er a sign of my Kitty?

Have you seen a fair maiden go by

Who was wed in this summer-struck city

About the first week in July?

How fair was her face there 's no telling;

She was well-nigh as wealthy as fair,

And of marble and brick was her dwelling

On the North side of Washington Square.

Have you seen her at *Newport* a-driving?

Have you seen her a-flirt at the *Pier*?

Is she written among the arriving

At the *Shoals* or the *Hamptons* this year?

Or out where the ocean bird flutters

Are the sea-breezes tossing her hair?

For closed are the ancient green shutters

In the house on North Washington Square.

So you, too, are trying to find her?

Then climb up these stairways with me,

That twist and grow blinder and blinder,

Till the skylight near heaven you see.

Is the sun my dull studio gilding?

Ah, no, it is Kitty sits there —

She has moved to the Studio Building

On the SOUTH side of Washington Square.

#### IV. AT DANCING-SCHOOL

THE master's old and lean and grim,  
And the gout is in his knees;  
And though he says his eyes are dim,  
My smallest fault he sees.

*Chassez and bow, and turn and bow —*

*I try my best to please —*

*No matter how, there's a frown on his brow —*

*And the gout is in his knees.*

He taught my father long ago;

He teaches me to-day:

A thousand small tired feet, I know,

Have stirred at his "chassez!"

*Chassez and bow, and turn and bow —*

*To the girl in pink and gray —*

*No matter how, there's a frown on his brow,*

*As he teaches me to-day.*

But what care I how stern he be,

If Pink-and-Gray be kind?

Oh, let him frown his best on me

If so he have a mind.

*Chassez and bow, and turn and bow —*

*My happy eyes are blind*

*To the frown on his brow — no matter how —*

*If Pink-and-Gray be kind.*

## BALLADS OF THE TOWN

Oh, let him frown, and frown his fill,

Howe'er he make me stir;

The CALEDONIAN QUADRILLE

To-day I dance with her.

*Chassez and bow, and turn and bow —*

*The fiddles whizz and whirr.*

*No matter how be the frown on his brow,*

*To-day I dance with her.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Ah, me! What years have slid away,

Sweet Pink-and-Gray, and *how!*

Since that old "CALEDONIAN'S" day —

They do not dance it now.

*Chassez and bow, and turn and bow;*

*And the master, grim and gray,*

*Has a frown on his brow, and yet, somehow,*

*The scholars slip away.*

I sit here in the evening's cool,

And see you, Pink-and-Gray,

Lead children to the dancing-school —

To the master grim and gray.

*Chassez and bow, and turn and bow —*

*I might have walked to-day —*

*No matter how — 't will never be now —*

*With you, sweet Pink-and-Gray!*

## V. THEIR WEDDING JOURNEY — 1834

*Dear Mother,*

When the Coach rolled off  
From dear old Battery Place  
I hid my face within my hands —  
That is, I hid my face.  
Tom says (*he's leaning over me!*)  
'T was on his Shoulder, too;  
But, oh, I pray you will believe  
I wept to part from You.

And when we rattled up Broadway  
I wept to leave the Scene  
Familiar to my happy Youth  
(I did love Bowling Green).  
I wept at Slidell's Chandlery  
To see the smoak arise —  
'T was only at the City Hall  
Tom bade me wipe my Eyes.

By Mr. Niblo's Garden, where  
You would not let me go,  
We went, and travell'd up the Hill —  
So fast, and yet so slow!  
And so we left behind the Town  
And ere the Sun had set  
We reach'd the Inn at Tubby Hook —<sup>5</sup>  
*We have not left it yet!*

## BALLADS OF THE TOWN

I know that we are very Wrong —  
    Dear Mother, pray forgive!  
From Sun to Sun 't is all so sweet —  
    It seems so sweet to Live!  
I know the things we meant to do,  
    The road we vow'd to go,  
But Tom and I are here, and — oh,  
    Dear Mother, *do* you know?

We have not gone to Uncle John's,  
    Though Yonkers is so near —  
We never shall see Cousin Van  
    At Tarrytown, I fear.  
Our Peekskill friends, the Fishkill folk,  
    And all the waiting rest —  
Tom bids me tell you they may wait —  
    (He says they may be Blest).

I know 't is ill to linger here  
    Hid in this woodland Inn,  
When all along Queen Anne's broad road  
    Await our Friends and Kin;  
But, Dear Mama (when I was small:  
    You let me call you so),  
'T is such Felicity and Joy  
    With Him, Here! Do you know?

YOUR ISABEL.

P. S. — Tom sends  
    His love. Please write, "*I know*."

## VI. TO A JUNE BREEZE

BEING A LOVER'S MESSAGE TO HIS MISTRESS

A-SUMMERING

WIND of the City Streets,  
    Impatient to be free,  
In this dull time of heats  
    My love takes wings to flee —  
Leave thou this idle Town  
And hunt Her down.

Wherever She may stay,  
    By Sea or Mountain-side,  
Make thou thy airy Way,  
    If there She bide;  
If sea-spray kiss Her face;  
Or hills find grace.

And, having found Her out,  
    On Sands or under Trees,  
Say that I wait in doubt,  
    To melt with love or freeze:  
Nor yet hath Summer stirred;  
But waits Her word.

## BALLADS OF THE TOWN

Say that, if She so please,  
These ways so dusty-dry,  
With their poor song-shunn'd Trees,  
Shall ring with Melody;  
And turn Love's Wilderness,  
If She say Yes.

But if my Fate fall so  
That She will naught of me,  
Tell Her the Winter's snow  
Shall strip the greenest tree:  
One only Frost I fear —  
She makes my Year.

Go, then, sweet Wind, and pray  
That She remember  
She makes my March or May,  
June or December —

If Town grow green with trees:  
If the new Blossoms freeze:  
Hers it is but to say —  
Pray Her that so She please —  
Pray Her remember !

## VII. THE CHAPERON

I TAKE my chaperon to the play —  
    She thinks she 's taking me.  
And the gilded youth who owns the box,  
    A proud young man is he —  
But how would his young heart be hurt  
    If he could only know  
    That not for his sweet sake I go  
    Nor yet to see the trifling show;  
But to see my chaperon flirt.

Her eyes beneath her snowy hair  
    They sparkle young as mine;  
There 's scarce a wrinkle in her hand  
    So delicate and fine.  
And when my chaperon is seen,  
    They come from everywhere —  
    The dear old boys with silvery hair,  
    With old-time grace and old-time air,  
To greet their old-time queen.

They bow as my young Midas here  
    Will never learn to bow  
(The dancing-masters do not teach  
    That gracious reverence now);  
With voices quavering just a bit,  
    They play their old parts through,  
    They talk of folk who used to woo,



## BALLADS OF THE TOWN

Of hearts that broke in 'fifty-two —  
Now none the worst for it.

And as those aged crickets chirp  
    I watch my chaperon's face,  
And see the dear old features take  
    A new and tender grace —  
And in her happy eyes I see  
    Her youth awakening bright,  
    With all its hope, desire, delight —  
    Ah, me! I wish that I were quite  
As young — as young as she!

## VIII. A SONG OF BEDFORD STREET

IT 's a long time ago and a poor time to boast of,  
The foolish old time of two young people's start;  
But sweet were the days that young love made the  
most of —

So short by the clock, and so long by the heart!  
We lived in a cottage in old Greenwich Village,  
With a tiny clay plot that was burnt brown and  
hard;  
But it softened at last to my girl's patient tillage,  
And the roses sprang up in our little back yard.

The roses sprang up and the yellow day-lilies;  
And heartsease and pansies, sweet Williams and  
stocks,  
And bachelors'-buttons and bright daffodillies  
Filled green little beds that I bordered with box.  
They were plain country posies, bright-hued and sweet-  
smelling,  
And the two of us worked for them, worked long  
and hard;  
And the flowers she had loved in her old-country  
dwelling,  
They made her at home in our little back yard.

## BALLADS OF THE TOWN

In the morning I dug while the breakfast was cooking,  
And went to the shop, where I toiled all the day;  
And at night I returned, and I found my love looking  
With her bright country eyes down the dull city  
way.

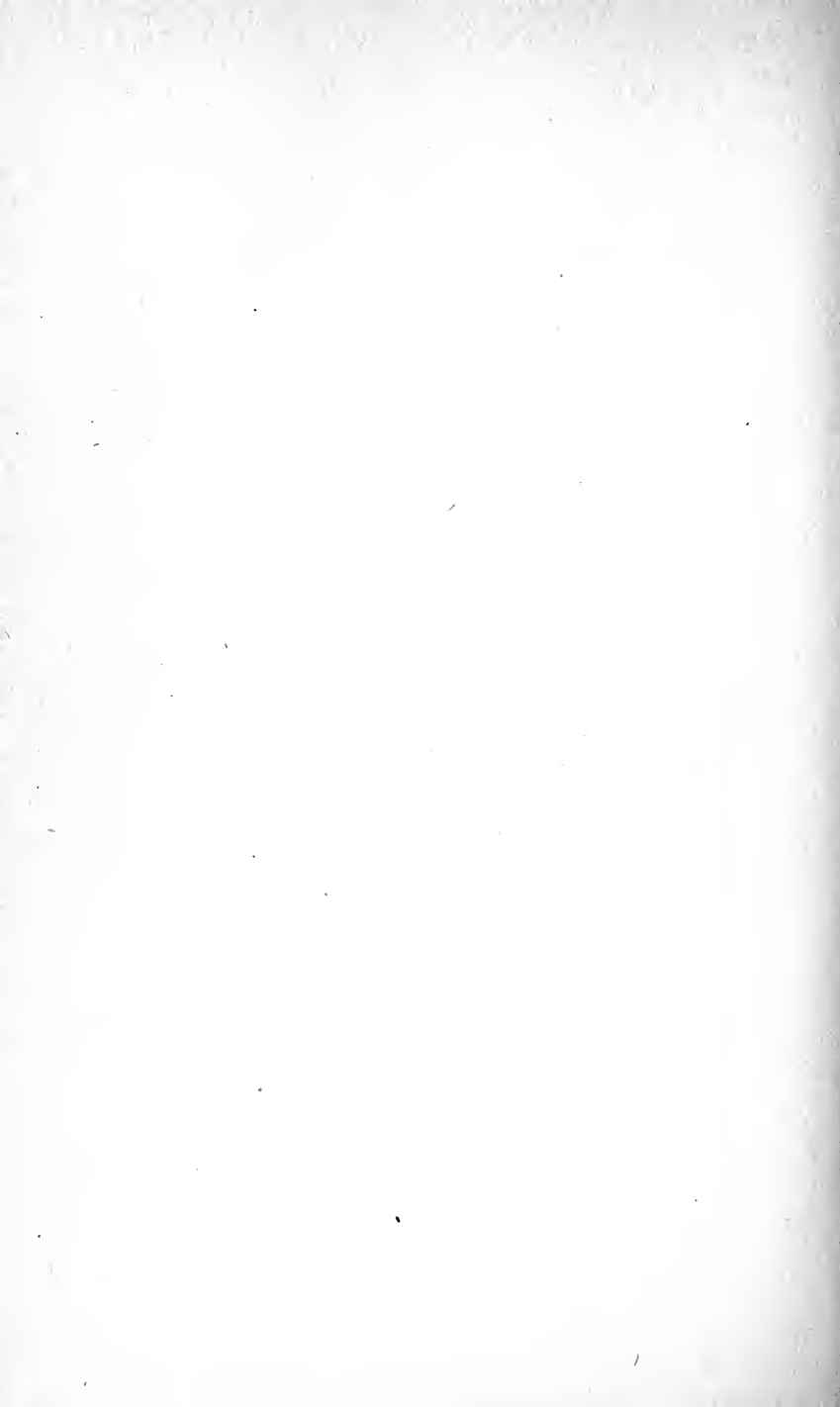
And first she would tell me what flowers were blooming,  
And her soft hand slipped into a hand that was  
hard,

And she led through the house, till a breeze came per-  
fuming

Our little back hall from our little back yard.

It was long, long ago, and we have n't grown wealthy;  
And we don't live in state up in Madison Square:  
But the old man is hale, and he's happy and healthy,  
And his wife's none the worse for the gray in her  
hair.

Each year lends a sweeter new scent to the roses;  
Each year makes hard life seem a little less hard;  
And each year a new love for old lovers discloses —  
Come, wife, let us walk in our little back yard!



## LATER LYRICS



## THE RED BOX AT VESEY STREET

PAST the Red Box at Vesey street  
Swing two strong tides of hurrying feet,  
And up and down and all the day  
Rises a sullen roar, to say  
The Bowery has met Broadway.  
And where the confluent current brawls  
Stands, fair and dear and old, St. Paul's,  
Through her grand window looking down  
Upon the fever of the town;  
Rearing her shrine of patriot pride  
Above that hungry human-tide  
Mad with the lust of sordid gain,  
Wild for the things that God holds vain;  
Blind, selfish, cruel — Stay there! out  
A man is turning from the rout,  
And stops to drop a folded sheet  
In the Red Box at Vesey street.

On goes he to the money-mart,  
A broker, shrewd and tricky-smart;  
But in the space you saw him stand,  
He reached and grasped a brother's hand:  
And some poor bed-rid wretch will find  
Bed-life a little less unkind  
For that man's stopping. They who pass  
Under St. Paul's broad roseate glass

## LATER LYRICS

Have but to reach their hands to gain  
The pitiful world of prisoned pain.  
The hospital's poor captive lies  
Waiting the day with weary eyes,  
Waiting the day, to hear again  
News of the outer world of men,  
Brought to him in a crumpled sheet  
From the Red Box at Vesey street.

For the Red Box at Vesey street  
Was made because men's hearts must beat;  
Because the humblest kindly thought  
May do what wealth has never bought.  
That journal in your hand you hold  
To you already has grown old, —  
Stale, dull, a thing to throw away, —  
Yet since the earliest gleam of day  
Men in a score of hospitals  
Have lain and watched the whitewashed walls;  
Waiting the hour that brings more near  
The Life so infinitely dear —  
The Life of trouble, toil, and strife,  
Hard, if you will — but Life, Life, Life!  
Tell them, O friend! that life is sweet  
Through the Red Box at Vesey street.



## SHRIVEN

A. D. 1425

"After he had given his final directions, he asked his physicians how long they thought he might live. And when they told him, 'About two hours,' he shut out from his thoughts every earthly care, and spent his remaining moments in devotion."

I HAVE let the world go.

That's the door that closed  
Behind the holy father. I am shrived.  
All 's done — all 's said — all 's shaped and rounded  
out —

And one hour yet to wait for death. Good Lord!  
How easy 't was to let this vain life go!  
Why, I protest, I, who have fought for life  
These fifty years more times than I would count,  
I gave the poor thing up but now as though  
I toss'd away a shilling — ask the priest!  
I gave life as lightly as I gave him  
For an altar-cloth that scarf of cloth of gold  
The King bound round my arm at Agincourt.

\* \* \* \* \*

One hour — one hour! and then a tug o' the heart  
And I shall see the saints. How plain they make it,  
These honest men of God! Was it at Lisle  
I met that paunchy little yellow friar,  
Like Cupid in a cassock with the jaundice,  
And played at cards with him two days together?

## LATER LYRICS

Stay, 't was at Calais, where I fought the Count —  
By 'r Lady, but they mock'd him! — 't was at Calais —  
Now had I had some converse with that brother  
It might have been the better for my soul.  
Though 't is all one, I take it, now. . . . The Abbess!  
He told a master-story of an Abbess —  
An Abbess and a Clerk — but godly talk,  
If I remember me aright . . . we had not.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ay, 't is fair lying here, to watch the sun  
Creep up yon wall. I would that I had thought  
To give that priest the ruby in my hilt  
To buy him better store of sacred oil —  
The anointed go to Paradise, methinks,  
Something too rancid-flavored.

What's the clock?

This hour's too full of minutes — minutes — minutes.  
Ah, well, I have done with time. 'T is but an hour.  
I have let go the world.

Would my dog were here!

## SONG FOR LABOR DAY<sup>6</sup>

HIS voice who made the land  
For his holiest hath decreed it;  
His chosen it shall stand  
And the Lord shall lead it.

Work, work, thy lot shall be,  
And the worker shall possess thee —  
Grown strong from sea to sea,  
No foeman shall distress thee —  
Work on! Work on! America!

His voice in that day said:  
"Thou shalt labor, O my chosen,  
When suns are hot o'erhead;  
When waters shall be frozen."

Work, work, thy lot shall be,  
And the worker shall possess thee —  
Grown strong from sea to sea,  
No foeman shall distress thee —  
Work on! Work on! America!

His voice hath spoken down:  
"Thou shalt conquer the despoiler.  
Thy labor is thy crown  
And thy might, O Toiler!"

## LATER LYRICS

Work, work, thy lot shall be,  
And the worker shall possess thee —  
Grown strong from sea to sea,  
No foeman shall distress thee —  
Work on! Work on! America!

## “THEY ALSO SERVE”

A poem read before the Army of the Potomac at its Twenty-sixth Annual Reunion, New London, Conn., June 18, 1895.

FRIENDS — for we are all friends in one great bond —  
That, born in death, shall go death's power beyond,  
That shall endure so long as love shall twine  
The first Spring blossoms for the patriot shrine.  
So long as men shall deck with living green  
The dust of friends unknown, unmet, unseen;  
So long as Love shall quicken Memory's birth,  
Each year to seek the consecrated earth,  
To wreath the tombs among the fresh Spring showers,  
With heaven's own banner and with earth's own  
flowers —

So long the sacred tie that makes us kin  
Shall know no petty bonds of time or space,  
But hold us in the friendship of one race —  
The friendship that our dead have knit us in.  
Here I am come to speak to you, my brothers —  
My elder brothers — of a long-passed day  
When you were fighting for this flag; when others  
Remained at home to watch — to yearn — to pray.  
What shall I tell to you, who truly followed  
The troublous path my young soul longed to go?  
You know that for your help God's palm was hollowed,  
And how his strength prevailed against the foe.

## LATER LYRICS

But, may I tell the tale of those who waited  
Patient at home — the old, the infirm, the young —  
Watching the strife wherein they were not fated  
Even to die unhonored and unsung?

What does the boy do who goes to bed  
In the great third year of the war,  
With the farm-house roof hanging low over head,  
And the path of the moon stretching out before,  
Out over the wood and over the lake,  
To the dusty highway the soldiers take  
When they march on their way to the South?

What does he do when he goes to bed? —  
He lays on the pillow a tousled head,  
And the tired eyelids that all the day  
Have been with the face of the world at play;  
Watching the birds and the swing of the trees,  
Watching the chipmunks more quick than the  
breeze,  
Watching the melons a taking on green,  
Watching the myriad things to be seen —

— They close for a moment and open again,  
For he hears the tramp of the marching men  
Southward and ever south;  
And he swallows a sob, and shuts tight his mouth,  
And orders his heart to the right-about,  
But even in slumber his tears slip out,  
That the sound of the drum and the fife  
Is slipping away to the strife,

## LATER LYRICS

Where he may not go  
Till sun and snow  
Have carried his eager young spirit — say —  
A couple of years on its patriot way.

Oh, how he yearns for it,  
How his heart burns for it —  
How the shrill music of drum and of fife  
Thrills through the whole of him,  
Wakes the young soul of him —  
Oh, to be with them and pay with his life!

What does the boy do who goes to bed  
In the great third year of the war?  
Wakes in the morn when the east is red,  
And the west is silvered o'er;  
Wakes in the morning and goes to work,  
Eating his heart, but too proud to shirk,  
Dropping the corn in the heart of the hill,  
Plying his spade and his hoe with a will;  
And his mother looks from the kitchen stoop,  
With reddened eyelids that quiver and droop,  
At the one boy left her — O, friends in blue —  
Was n't he fighting as well as you?

Oh, let me not by any doubtful word  
Question your mighty service: what you wrought  
Was wrought forever, and the eternal years  
Shall not undo it. But we all have seen  
The glory of that mighty miracle.

## LATER LYRICS

The foulest of foul stains you washed with blood  
From off your country's shield: your strong hand rent  
The chains ourselves had forged ourselves to fetter,  
But, oh! remember that no fleshly wound  
Fell crueler than the blows the true hearts bore  
You left behind you when you took your way.  
Do you know how they looked in our eyes, do you  
    know how they looked as they went? —  
The picture is ever before me — friends, will you look  
    at yourselves?

See how they swing down the street with the glint of  
    the sun  
Silvering the steel of the gun.  
With an easy swing to the hips, as they march on,  
    shoulder to shoulder,  
Doubtful, uncertain at first, and then growing firmer  
    and bolder  
As the cheers of the crowd rise round them, and run in  
    a rattling roar  
Down on each side of the column and out like a fire  
    before.  
It swells by their side to a thunder that hushes the  
    beat of their feet,  
It catches their cadence of marching and rolls it ahead  
    down the street;  
Down the whole length of the roadway, through the  
    throng of the thousands that wait,  
Down goes the heralding thunder as the troops march  
    on in state.



## LATER LYRICS

And down where the Battery breezes are blowing  
through Bowling Green  
The men of New York are cheering the troops that  
they have not seen.  
Oh, glorious pageant of war that shall sweep you along  
amid cheers! —  
But the wife you have left is this moment thanking  
God for the blindness of tears.

She kissed you, and she raised unclouded eyes  
That hid the unspeakable pain of unshed tears.  
She kissed you and she lifted up your child,  
For she had taught him to be brave like you —  
Or her — how shall we put it, O, my friend?  
She kissed you, and she sent you on your way,  
Her noble wifehood strengthening you for fight,  
And turned her patient face toward home to stay  
And bear the wound that aches from morn to  
night.

Oh, trust me if I speak of those who shared  
Your pain and not your glory; it is not  
To rob your laurels of a single leaf,  
But to proclaim how that close tie of grief  
Bound you in bonds of love to childish hearts  
That in these days, grown closer to the age  
Of those they honor, still recall the past —  
Recall the past, and how you met the task  
You found set for you, and not newly set,  
But waiting for the work of men like you,  
But waiting for the faith of men like you —  
Waiting through centuries of wrong and shame

## LATER LYRICS

Since Christ decreed the brotherhood of Man,  
For it was as His soldiers that they went,  
Who, being dead, have left their trust to us.

I was not of you, but that tie still binds  
My childish memories unto unborn minds,  
And I shall teach *my* boy the way to go  
By paths your fearless footsteps served to show.  
And if he serves his country firm and true,  
'T is that his father learned to serve from *you*.

## THE QUEST

UPON my lips there fell, when first the Night  
Pales in the highest heaven, seeing Day  
Far down the fathomless Eastern depths away —  
Pales with a fearful joy, a dread delight —  
Upon my lips, with wakeful watching white  
There fell a kiss. One instant's space it lay  
Soft as a rose-leaf that the West-winds fray,  
And then my eyes awoke to dazzled sight.

The warmth, the tender impact and the thrill  
Burnt on my lips, and the calm pulse of Sleep  
Awoke and quivered quick in soft surprise.  
*From that day forward knew I Love!*

And still  
By day I search, and nightly vigil keep  
For Her revealed to me in such strange wise.

## UNAWARE

I WOULD not have you so kindly  
    Thus early in friendship's year —  
A little too gently, blindly,  
    You let me near.

So long as my voice is duly  
    Calm as a friend's should be,  
In my eyes the hunger unruly  
    You will not see.

The eyes that you lift so brightly,  
    Frankly to welcome mine —  
You bend them again as lightly  
    And note no sign.

I had rather your pale cheek reddened  
    With the flush of an angry pride —  
That a look with disliking deadened  
    My gaze defied.

If so in the Spring's full season  
    Your glance should soften and fall,  
When, reckless with fever's unreason,  
    I tell you all.

## A MAGIC GIFT \*

I ALWAYS believed the fairy tales,  
For with every year I grew  
I found that more and more of them  
Were the truest kind of true.

And of all the tales I knew and loved  
In the days when I was small,  
You have chosen, to prove its truth to me,  
The prettiest one of all.

The tale of the maid whose lips dropped pearls,  
And roses and all things sweet,  
Because she was simply civil and kind  
To a fairy she chanced to meet.

Why should n't it happen to girls — and boys —  
In the days when fairies *flew* —  
Since a few poor latter-day words of mine  
Have been turned into flowers by you?

\* These verses were an acknowledgment of some flowers, sent to Mr. Bunner in gratitude for a reading he had given in aid of a charity.

## LUTETIA

1856

OFTEN in visions of the night I seem  
    To pace thy avenues with enchanted feet;  
    Walk thy broad boulevards from the mid-day heat  
Till myriad gas-jets through the calm dusk gleam;  
See moonlight crown Napoleon's tower supreme;  
    Watch in the Latin Quarter's darkest street  
    From revelling in some cavernous retreat,  
Strange student-shapes into the cool night stream —  
Young hungry gods of genius — or where beam  
    Lights of Lampsakian gardens: where is blown  
    White hot the fire of folly, to turn again.  
Yet ever flies the spirit of my dream  
    To that high garret, where, sick, blind, alone,  
    Lies Heine on his pallet-prison of pain.

## NOTES





## NOTES

1 "There was a vague murmur in the air of little brooks, that one might fancy had lost their way in the darkness, and were whispering together how they should get home."

—"In the Distance," by G. P. Lathrop.

2 The only authority I have for calling this "A Real Romance" is the following, clipped from a stray newspaper in '77 or '78:

"A school-girl at Bellefontaine, Ohio, offended her boy lover, and he refused to speak to her. She passed a note to him, asking forgiveness, but he refused. She wrote to him again, saying that she would kill herself if he did not make up; and he replied that he would be glad to go to her funeral. She then began her suicidal efforts by drinking a bottle of red ink, which only made her sick. A bottle of black ink had no deadlier effect. Finally, she cut her throat with a knife, but not fatally, though she made a deep and dangerous gash."

3 Like the Roman citizen's right of appeal to Cæsar, there was, according to some authorities, a supreme right of appeal to Harold of Normandy. It was invoked by crying "Haro! Haro! Haro!" In a modified form, the legal tradition still survives, I believe, in some of the Channel Islands.

4 Read at the farewell dinner to Salvini, New-York, April 26th, 1883.

5 The sun of Tubby Hook has set.

'T is *INWOOD* now — and folks forget.

6 Written for Franklin Public School, Labor Day, 1894.





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